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The Hanseatic Control of Norwegian Commerce during the  
Late Middle Ages.

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ABBREVIATIONS

B.H.F.S.	Bergens Historiske Forenings Skrifter
A.B.	Bugge, A.: Norges Historie
N.S.H.	Bugge, A.: Den Norske sjøfarts historie fra de ældste tider til vore dage
D.N.	Diplomatarium Norvegicum
H.G.B.	Hansische Geschichtsblätter
H.G.Q.	Hansische Geschichtsquellen
H.M.S.	Hanseatiske Museums Skrifter
H.R.	Hansische Recesse
H.U.	Hansisches Urkundebuch
N.U.	Johnsen, A. O.: Norgesveldets undergang
N.G.L.	Norges Gamle Love
J.S.	Schreiner, J.: Hanseaterne og Norge i Det 16 Aarhundre
K.S.	v. Schloser, K.: Die Hansa und der Deutsche Ritter Orden in der Ostseeländern
H.B.	Wiberg, C. K.: Hanseaterne og Borgen

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## CHAPTER I.

### Norway: From Viking Times to 1250

In order to better understand the gradual formation of what was later to evolve as the Hanseatic League and its relations with Norway an account seems requisite of what preceded it in the north-west German and European trade with Norway and the Baltic.

In few countries has commerce ever played so important a part in the economic welfare of a people as in Norway, where many of the necessities of life have had to be imported. Of these grain has been the most important. Contemporary records indicate that ever since the thirteenth century the Norwegians were largely dependent upon the importation of foreign foodstuffs, chiefly flour and malt. Domestic production of grain became insufficient during that century principally because of the great shift of population to the Nordland fisheries.

Fortunately Norway had something of value to exchange for the foodstuffs which could be more profitably grown in South Europe, namely, fish, and to a lesser extent butter and hides. Dried fish was the principal article of export during the Middle Ages. The growth of urban population in the Rhine region, South-Germany, and the Baltic, gave a wide market for Norway's chief product, which even found its way as far south as Italy. Norway had from early times been a fishing



nation, but trade in fish began first on a large scale during the long-drawn-out wars of the various pretenders to the throne. (1130.-1240) The codfish, caught in the Lofoten Islands assured commercial importance. The first evidence of this comes from the Icelandic account which states that King Óistein Magnusson (1103-1130), during the first or second decade of the twelfth century, had a church built in the central part of the great Lofoten fishing grounds. From the same period we also read of the royal levying of taxes in Vaagen harbor in Bergen. (1)

The earlier important trading in Norwegian and Russian furs (2) with the Frisians had, owing to the increase in English and North German trade, slowly died down (3), but in the eleventh century there was a new development in the North Sea trade, not only with the Frisians, but with the south and central German and Dutch regions. In Flanders and along the Rhine the Norwegians could obtain cloths, salt, and metal products and give in return, butter, meat, costly walrus teeth, and furs. The same was the case with England.

While there had always been an abundance of cod in Lofoten, the Norwegians had not until now, because of a certain self-sufficiency or isolation, grasped the possibilities of exchanging it for what they lacked and could find in Flanders, the Rhine districts, Saxony, and England. (4)

The foreigners came, in return, to Norway to buy and sell, first singly but soon in numbers. As early as 1190 their

(1) H.B. I, 3.

(2) From Norway, fox, bear and rabbit and hare, from Russia also costlier qualities.

(3) Ibid, I, 112.

(4) E. Bull, Det norske folks liv og historie, II, 112.

numbers in Bergen impressed the visitor. These foreigners did not wish to go as far north as the Lofoten fishing grounds and so left it to the few Bergen merchants to warehouse and sell their products. Protecting commercial laws were soon promulgated. (1) But while many foreign traders and merchants early established themselves in Bergen, the most important of Norway's commercial relations up to the middle of the thirteenth century were with England.

"No country," says the Norwegian historian Nicolay-sen, "influenced Norway in the early middle ages more than England, in religion, in letter-writing, in clothing and in building." Many of the Norwegian ecclesiastics were born or educated in England (2); the older cloisters were founded from there and the relations with the mother foundations were long retained, especially by the Cistercian Cloister of Lyse, near Bergen, a daughter of Fountains Abbey near York.

Norway's trade with England began to become regular as early as the eleventh century. Despite the preceding decades of bloodshed and plunder the Norwegian merchants soon found themselves in such favor that they were allowed to spend the winter months in England and English merchants were well received in Norwegian coastal towns. (3)

The founding of Bergen corresponded approximately to the time of the Norman conquest of England. Though the

(1) The twelfth century Bjarkøyrett laid down rules for the fishermen, the Bergen middlemen, and the foreign merchants. Schreiner, Hanseaterne og Norges nedgang, p. 9.

(2) A.B., pp. 74-77.

(3) Taranger, Norges Historie, III<sup>I</sup>, p. 87.

Bugge, Handelen mellem England og Norge indtil begyndelsen af det 15<sup>de</sup> aarhundre, p. 6.

intrepid Norse sailors, particularly those from Norway's western shore, had many times sailed westward prior to this, the development of English shipping by the Normans resulted in return visits. These went back to Canute the Great's conquest of Norway (1028-1030) when various Norwegian earls had settled in England and considerable trade was carried on "Ships of the North sailed every summer laden with the products of northern Europe: furs from Norway and Russia: the teeth of walrus from the Arctic seas: Norwegian hawks for the English sportsmen. In return for these the Northmen received the luxuries of the south." (1) These, and the peaceful conditions in Norway, during the reign of Erling and Magnus, in the middle of the twelfth century, and that of Haakon Haakonsson (1217-63), the King's friendly attitude toward strangers, and the foundation of a city conveniently near to England and well suited as a market place for the export of Norwegian produce, all encouraged the rapid development of trade relations between the two countries. (2) In England the Northerners were able to obtain some of the products that had been brought there from French, Flemish, and Rhenish cities in return for wool. The Norwegians paid in furs, dried fish, fish oil, seals and whales, lard, and some of the objects they had obtained in the Black Sea region. England obtained practically all her furs from Northern traders who had received them from the northern regions of their country and from Russia. (3)

(1) Larsen, Canute the Great, 288.

(2) Mostly undertaken in Norwegian vessels.

(3) Vogel, Nordische Seefahrten im früheren Mittelalter, p. 9

In the year 1130 the Englishman, Ordericus Vitalis, tells of the cities on the Norwegian coast which he and others had visited. (1) And William of Malmesbury says in his De Gestis Regum Anglorum, "In eadem valle est vicus celeberrimus, Bristou nomine, in quo est portus navium ab Hibernia et Norvegia et ceteris transmarinis terris venientium." (2)

At the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries, under King Henry II and King John, the Norwegian-English trade increased. As foreigners were permitted freely to enter English ports, trade flourished throughout the reigns of Haakon Haakonsson and his son and grandson. The Norwegians sailed to Grimsby, Lynn, Wash, Bristol, London, Boston, Yarmouth, and Newcastle carrying timber, herring, dried cod, furs, and falcons, bringing back cloth (bluett, russet, blanket, and wurstede from Worstead), a few costly fabrics, lead, spices, fancy articles, ale, beans and honey (3), as well as luxury articles and church-bells. Embassies were constantly crossing the North Sea on commercial rather than political errands. Thus under Henry II in 1155, 1158, and 1163 (4) Norway sent ambassadors to England. In 1180 an English merchant was given permission to export grain to Norway during a period of fifteen years on condition that he bring a falcon back with him for the King after every trip. (5) In a

(1) Shetelig, Det norske folks liv og historie, I, 272.

(2) Lib IV, p. 292 (Rolls Series No. 91), Bristou - Bristol.

(3) Bugge, Studier over de norske byers selvstyre og handel før hanseaternes tid, p. 155.

(4) Pipe Roll Society Publications, I, 45.

(5) D.N., XIX, 59.

letter of 1155 (or 1160) (1) Henry II said to the Norwegian merchants coming to Grimsby, Boston, and Lynn: "I bid you pay my officials all the dues and taxes which it was your custom to pay them there in the days of my grandfather, King Henry, and should you refrain from so doing a fine of ten pounds will be collected." From this we may conclude that Norwegian merchants had been trading in England during the reign of the Conqueror's son, Henry I, between 1100 and 1135. In 1201 or 1202 King John sent King Sverre and Haakon gifts of wheat. (2) In 1214 he sent grain, malt, rings, and buckles as gifts to the King of Norway. (3) Had not trade been of the greatest importance he would probably have shown no such generosity.

During the reign of Henry II (1155-1189), those of his sons, Richard the Lionhearted (1189-1199) and John Lackland (1199-1216), and that of his grandson, Henry III (1216-1272) the good understanding (4) between the Norwegian and English kings persisted. Gifts and visites de politesse continued and the English kings proved themselves particularly friendly toward Norwegian prelates, as shown by their reception of the exiled Archbishop Oistein (5) and the permission granted the Archbishop of Nidaros by Henry II to bring annually to his church, free of all payments, a shipload of grain and food-stuffs, a permission reaffirmed by both of his sons (6). King

(1) N.S.H., p. 182.

(2) Ibid, p. 183.

(3) Bugge, Handelen mellem England og Norge indtil begybdelsen af det 15de aarhundre, p. 16.

(4) D.N., XIX, nos. 44, 61, 62.

(5) Ibid.

(6) Hakluyt, The Principal Navigations, voyages, traffiques, and discoveries of the English Nation, Bishop (1599-1600) I, 321; also D.N., XIX, no. 153.

John took Bishop Martin of Bergen under his protection and temporarily freed the Abbot of Lyse (1) Cloister from all English port charges and in 1217 Henry III wrote:

Henry by the Grace of God, etc. unto Haquinus, by the same grace, King of Norway, sends greeting. We render unto your highness unspeakable thanks for those things which by your letters, and by your discreet subject, the Abbot of Lisa, you have signified to us, and also for that you are right willing and desirous to begin and conclude between us both, a league of peace and amity. And we for our part both now are, and hereafter shall be well content, that both our lands be common, to the end that the merchants and people of your dominions may freely and without impediment resort unto our land, and our people and merchants may likewise have recourse unto your territories. Provided, that for the confirmation of this matter, you send to us your letters patent, and we will send ours also unto you. Howbeit in the meanwhile we do, will and freely grant, that the merchants both of our and your lands, may go, come and return to and from both our Dominions. And if there be aught in your mind, whereby we might thank you in any stead, you may boldly signify the same to us. We have as yet detained the said Abbot, that we might, to our ability, cause restitution to be made for your ship, and for the things therein contained by whom we will certify you of our own estate, and of the estate of our Kingdom as soon, etc.

Witness our-self at Lambeth the tenth of October.

Henry III further showed his friendliness to Norway by permitting, despite the temporary English ban, a thousand quar-  
tina of grain (2) to be exported home by the Norwegian merchants residing in Lynn and Yarmouth. In the thirteenth-century relations and negotiations between Norway and England, the initiative was always Norway's, for the Norwegian kings wished at all cost to maintain a friendly intercourse and obtain grain. The commercial treaties between the two in the early part of the thirteenth century (3) are the earliest known treaties dealing with commercial matters, in the history of either country.

(1) Lysør.

(2) N.G.L., III, 25.

(3) Bugge, Handelen mellem England og Norge indtil begyndelsen af det 15<sup>de</sup> aarhundre, p. 199.

Trade had developed to a point where an England-fahrer guild had been established in Bergen. (1) We learn that shortly before 1300 the Norwegian king himself, as well as the Archbishop of Nidaros and various abbots and noblemen either owned vessels bound for England or were busy buying and selling there. This was Norway's happiest period of the Middle Ages — which English friendship aided materially. The gifts that went back and forth between the two friendly monarchs were carried by leading court officials as well as by merchants.

Although during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries Norway's foreign trade was carried on largely with England, there were others on the stage; the Dutch had a minor role, and the Germans played a part that was later to become dominant and fatal.

We have a record of Norwegian vessels calling at Utrecht being admitted free of customs duties in 1120. (2) One of the customs receipts states: "When the Danes came to trade in Utrecht, each one of them must pay four denars, but we know the Norwegians are free from duties." (3) There are also various early references to Dutch vessels in Norwegian ports. Despite the fact that the Dutch did not themselves produce the grains, malt, and beer most desired by the Norwegians, (4)

- (1) Bugge, Handelen mellem England og Norge indtil begyndelsen af det 15<sup>de</sup> aarhundre, p. 469.
- (2) Meilink, De Nederlandsche Hanzesteden tot het laatste kwartaal der XIV<sup>e</sup> eeuw, pp. 219-224.
- (3) H.U., I, no. 8.
- (4) Bruns, Die Lübecker Bergenfahrer und ihre Chronostik, p. 389.

they exchanged Flanders' cloths and Liège swords for desired northern products. (1) Deventer customs tariffs of around 1200 mention in several places the arrival of Norwegian timber. The Cartulaire de l'ancienne Estaple de Bruges (1200) (2), after mentioning goods that came from England, Scotland, and Ireland, says: "From the Kingdom of Norway came falcons, barrel-staves, tanned hides, butter, tallow, cod-liver oil and goat skins which are made into cordovan leather (korduan-skin)." In addition the Dutch were active intermediaries in English-Norwegian trade. A document in the Hansisches Urkundebuch mentions the arrest of Stavoren and Groningen vessels lying in the harbor of Lynn in 1224 with cargoes of grain and malt. (3) It is not unreasonable to assume that these were intended for Norway. Alexander Bugge in his Studier over de Norske byers selvstyre og handel mentions a Kampen skipper of this period in charge of a Norwegian merchant taking supplies home to Norway. Other Kampen and Groningen vessels likewise came with English grain. (4) But in the thirteenth century, when Norwegian mercantile activity was considerable, there are few indications that the Norwegians attached such importance to their Dutch as to their English and Baltic trade.

- (1) Bugge, Den Norske Trelasthandels Historie, I, p. 58.
- (2) Cartulaire de l'ancienne Estaple de Bruges, Vol. I, no. 14, p. 19.  
Dou royaume de Norweghe viennent gerfaut, merriens, cuir bouli,  
burre, sui, oint et pois, cuirs de bouc, dont ou fait cordou-  
an. L. Gilliodts van Severen, 1904, Bruges, de Plancke.
- (3) H.U. Vol. 1, no. 160.
- (4) Hegel, Städte und Gilden, I, 329.



The augmented role of the Germans in the Norwegian trade during the thirteenth century rested, in general, upon their increasing importance in the entire North European trade pattern, and, in particular, upon their ability to supply Norway's growing demand for grain. The oldest documents mentioning the relations between the Hanse towns and Norway are two letters sent to the Lübeck Council by King Haakonsson (1217-1263) around 1250. In them the King asks the Lübeckers to send their ships to Norway in the usual way (in estate more) with the goods needed by the country (nostro regno necessariis), namely grain, flour, and malt. "Here we are thus told of the import of foodstuffs, which the country could not do without, which came north to Lübeck in abundance from the Rhine region and west from its Baltic colonies and which England, with the best of good will, could not at times, when most needed, send in sufficient quantity. Here we have one side of the basis of the future Hanseatic trade in Norway." (1)

In 1250 King Haakon IV concluded a treaty with Lübeck that was the basis of the subsequent commercial domination of the Germans in Norway. (2)

(1) J.S., p. 15.

(2) Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lübeck I, No. CLVII (Oct. 6, 1250).

## CHAPTER II.

### North European Trade: to about 1400

When the North-German merchants established commercial relations with Norway in the second half of the twelfth century, it was the West-Germans who took the lead, the north-western cities acting as connecting links between the Rhine valley and Scandinavia. Cologne had become commercially important as early as about 1157 (1) when her traders had established their own Hanse in London, shortly to be joined by citizens from Westphalian cities. The company of German Gotlandsfahrer, founded in the twelfth century under Westphalian leadership, not only traded with Russia but also became the leaders in the trade with Norway, England, and the Baltic countries. The new commercial life which, independent of the Crusades, stirred throughout northern Europe around 1100 was first and foremost instigated by West-Germans. Their pre-eminence was due largely to the fact that the valley of the Rhine was the great trade artery between the Mediterranean countries and the regions north of the Alps.

In the far-reaching activity of the West-German merchants, their Baltic trade soon became of much greater importance than their English and Norwegian connections. This was due to the great eastern colonization that was now taking

(1) Lappenberg, Urkundliche Geschichte des Hansischen Stahlhofes 3<sup>u</sup> London, 6.

place. A stream of German peasants and city-dwellers flowed across the Elbe, penetrating Slavic territory as far as Siebenburgen in the southeast and the gulf of Finland in the north. And with this shift of population German enterprise expanded greatly. Thus in the twelfth century the foundations were laid of the mid-European leadership which the German people have held through all following political vicissitudes. This eastern expansion was epochal in economic history. It was the basis of the development of the North-European commercial territory and it furnished the cradle for the most remarkable development of the Hanse organizations.

Early in the twelfth century German merchants, realizing the central commanding position of the island of Gotland in Baltic trading, settled there, built their own church, and promulgated in 1163 the laws by which they proposed to be governed in their private and business life. (1) Shortly after, a business association was formed for the purpose of facilitating the collection of sums due them and securing and safeguarding freedom of trade. And in 1320 (codified in 1447) the German merchants of Wisby, chief town of Gotland, issued a maritime code (2), which was a collection of the mercantile customs and regulations of the day. It was put in force throughout the Baltic and was not only made the basis of the ordinances of the Hanseatic League but became an important factor in the development of the modern system of maritime law.

(1) Thordeman, Armour from the Baltic and Wisby, 1361, pp. 9-11.

(2) Sanborn, Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, "Maritime Laws," p. 123.

But another city was destined to surpass Wisby in commerce and to take the lead in both the Baltic trade and the far-reaching international activities that came with the development of the League. That city was Lübeck on the mainland in the western corner of the Baltic, east of Holstein, near the communicating highway which crosses the comparatively narrow tongue of land between the Baltic and the North Sea. It was thus a connecting link in a trading territory that reached from Hamburg, or even Bruges and London in the west, to Novgorod in the east. That Lübeck governed the road which constituted the main artery in the North-European trade explains the unique position held by the city in commercial life during several centuries.

Moreover, Lübeck lay on the great Scandinavian trade routes and to that city came quantities of wares from both north and south. The old route went from Italy to Trento (Trient), Bolzen, Innsbruck, and Augsburg and from there over Würzburg, Eisenach, Goslar, and Brunswick to the Elbe and then toward Mollen and Old Lübeck, from where it divided toward either Denmark or the Scandinavian countries. King Erik of Denmark in 1098 took this road to Italy and most of the Icelandic pilgrims came the same route. (1)

At the very mouth of the Trave river lay originally the small fishing village to be known as "Old" Lübeck. It was destroyed by pirates from the island of Rügen in 1138. In

(1) K.S., p. 3.

its place a new Lübeck was founded in 1143 by Count Adolphus of Schauenburg and Holstein some six miles further up the river. Old Lübeck had been the earliest German city to locate on the Baltic. In the period of Frisian trade with the north the Danish city of Hedeby had been the great port of transshipment for the Baltic-North Sea trade. Owing to the great German colonizing of the Baltic, the center of transshipment moved eastward to Lübeck, from which the overland route to Hamburg was easy and convenient. As German colonization spread eastward across the old Slavic districts east of the Elbe, a series of German cities sprang up during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, reaching along the eastern Baltic shore all the way from Lübeck to Reval. The east-west exchange of goods laid the foundation for the power and riches of the Hansa cities. And Lübeck, because of its location, became the first among them. (1)

Two conditions were responsible for the astonishing rise of the Hansa cities on the Baltic: the conquest and Christianization of the Slavic tribes to the east, and the subsequent foundation and development of German trading centers. The conquest was effected by the gradual eastward pressure of the Germans and activities of the military Orders of the Brethren of the Sword and the Teutonic Knights. "Most of the towns were located at the mouths of the great rivers; commerce became their goal and merchant and townsman became synonymous." (2)

(1) Schreiner, Hanseaterne og Norges Nedgang, p. 36.

(2) Cambridge Medieval History, VII, 217.

The safeguarding of the Hamburg-Lubeck highway gave rise to the first intercity understanding. The merchant attempting to travel it was subject to many perils, and so were the operators of vessels belonging to ship-owners of the two cities. (1) According to the ancient law relating to Strandgut, all merchandise washed up on a shore belonged in its entirety to the owner of the land, and many a landowner was an expert at wrecking; the "droit de naufrage" was in reality nothing but organized brigandage. After several conferences, the leading merchants of Hamburg and Lubeck finally agreed in 1241 to safeguard with armed forces on land and armed vessels at sea the important road connecting the two cities and the waterfront from the duchies to the mouth of the Trave. (2) This important agreement also led to a similar maritime law for the two cities, similar coinage, and trade and municipal regulations. The common defense was to be undertaken just as much against plundering robber barons as against the common highwayman lying in wait for the passing merchant's caravan. In those days of feudalism, under the rule of the Holy Roman Emperor, conditions were such that safe trading could not have been established, let alone have prospered, had not the cities taken the safeguarding of routes into their own hands.

(1) The first Recesse decided that the cities according to their capacities (pro possibilitate sua) should keep the sea free of pirates and other evil doers. There was no suggestion of combining in trade. H.G.B., I, 15.

(2) Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lubeck, II, 186, 199, 241.

Count Adolphus of Schauenburg realized the political and economic importance of his new city of Lübeck, for here was the way-station for traders travelling from Westphalian cities to Wisby and Gotland. Duke Henry the Lion of Saxony likewise saw the value and future of the town and attempted to obtain it from Count Adolphus. Foiled in his effort he forbade all trade between Lübeck and his dominions lying south of it. In 1157 a fire destroyed the settlement and its inhabitants begged the redoubtable Saxon duke to have mercy upon them and their trade. The following year he and Count Adolphus came to agreement and a third Lübeck was founded which remained Henry's. He invited merchants to trade in it "absque theloneo et absque hansa," without toll or tax. The town prospered and grew by leaps and bounds. Henry issued to its citizens their first charter and constituted them a free Saxon community having their own magistrate, an advantage over all other towns of his dominions. When Henry was attainted by Frederik I, the Emperor came in person, besieged Lübeck and enlarged the liberties of the free town. In 1201 Lübeck was in turn conquered by Waldemar II of Denmark, but regained its liberty in 1226 and was once more made a free imperial city in the same year (1) by Frederik II.

Turning from the brief description of the rise of Lübeck to a consideration of the association of merchants of North-European towns which developed under the name of the

(1) For a discussion of Lübeck's growth see "Die Hanse und der deutsche Ritter Orden in den Ostseeländern" by R. von Schlözer.

Hanseatic League, we are met at the outset with the puzzling question of the meaning of the term "Hanse." This has been adequately dealt with elsewhere. Here we need merely to point out that "hanse" appears originally, if we may trust the philologist, to have been employed to designate an armed company. (1) As early as the twelfth century, however, it was used in reference to associations of merchants, and thus, in the fourteenth century, the term is applied to a league of North German merchants, the Hansa Teutonicorum, or Hanseatic League. But if adoption of the term was slow the growth of trading activities was not. In 1225 Denmark and Lübeck signed the following agreement:

Upon the Skaanör and Falsterbo markets the Lübeckers may unhindered buy and sell, and engage such a bailiff as they choose, who will render judgment between them, except in "blue and bloody" cases. They may engage in retail trade by payment of the customary taxes, which may be paid up to the time when the first cart touches the water's edge on its way with supplies to a vessel. Accusations made by royal officials must be refuted by oath, attested to by countrymen. Property of a deceased belongs to his rightful heirs. Forcible removal is only permissible when the accused has been caught red-handed. Every vessel arriving may discharge freely on the beach and all goods purchased may be taken away unhindered. On the Lübeck concession merely such vessels may lie as are permitted by the Lübeck bailiff. Beer may be sold by the bottle and the booths will belong to the heirs (of a deceased) as soon as royal taxes have been paid. (2)

In 1242 Lübeck took a further step, entering into agreements with the lords of the territories of Rügen, Mecklenburg, and Pomerania as to the wider safeguarding of surround-

(1) For derivation of the name Hansa see Heering: Die deutsche Hanse, p. 29. Sartorius, Der deutschen Hanse, p. 73. Worms, Histoire Commerciale de la Ligue Hanseatique, p. 59.

(2) Hering, Die deutsche Hanse, p. 61.



ing (1) trade routes and the abolition of Strandrecht and other matters. (2)

This was followed in 1259 by an agreement, negotiated by Lübeck, between herself and the more easterly Wendish towns on the Baltic — Stralsund, Wismar, Rostock, and Greifswald. Their interests were common and their field the Baltic, Russia and Scandinavia; their object was to maintain a monopoly of trade by excluding all rivals, and to preserve in their own hands the commercial prerogatives they had acquired in countries like Flanders and England. Their privileges in such foreign areas were to comprise freedom and security of traffic for their citizens, and also valuable customs rebates. After a few decades the other principal Baltic and North Sea cities joined them in a closer or looser union. The command was Lübeck's, though there was no written agreement about this, the claim being solely due to her past action and rising power. During the fourteenth century her growth in riches and importance was astonishing.

The Wendish group was followed by three other similar associations, those of Westphalia, of Saxony and Brandenburg, and of Prussia and Livonia. (3) While only the Wendish League traded in Scandinavia, all four agreed to co-operate and maintain a common front.

(1) K.S., p. 21.

(2) During the space of hardly a hundred years, along a shore of two hundred and fifty miles, fourteen large cities had arisen and new trade routes had been opened. North Germany was becoming a colonizing power equal to Greece in earlier days in the Mediterranean. K.S., p. 26.

(3) K.S., p. 118.

The fortunes of the Wendish towns were built upon the carrying trade of the Baltic and the Baltic herring fisheries centering outside the towns of Skaanor and Falsterbo on the promotory of the South-Swedish province of Scania. Here between August 15th and November 9th the greatest, busiest trading center arose, (1) the nundinae Schaniensis, consisting of fishermen, merchants, and Fahrende Frauen. The women were brought by the boat loads and the merchants who conveyed them reaped a rich harvest from their disreputable trade.

During the years 1368-1369 about 120,000 barrels of herring were salted in Scania. During 1398-1400 between 200,000 and 300,000 were salted in Scania. To this should be added the catch of Malmo and Dragor on Zealand, the amount of which is unknown. (2)

The father of Danish history, Saxo Grammaticus (1150-1220), probably stretches a long bow when he says: "The east side of Zealand is separated from Scania by a strait which annually brings a rich booty to the fishermen's nets. The entire sea is generally so full of fish that often the vessels are stopped and can hardly be rowed clear through great exertion and the booty can no longer be caught by artificial means but can without difficulty be caught by hand." (3)

(1) Weibull, Lubeck och Skanemarknaden. Studier i Lubecks pundtullsböcker och pundtullskvitton, 1368-1369 och 1398-1400 (Skrifter utgivna av Fahlbeckska Stiftelsen II) Lund 1922.

(2) From letter received by author from Professor Schreiner.

(3) Hering, Die deutsche Hanse, p. 60. Scania was the second most important province of Sweden and the seat of the archbishop of Lund. The province, originally debatable land between Sweden and Denmark, finally became Swedish under Karl Gustav in 1657.

Fish was needed, not only for the many fast days rigidly and universally observed in Catholic Europe, but also owing to the fact that meat was comparatively scarce and dear and the poorer classes obtained little of it. The large supplies of dried or salted fish were thus indispensable. Fish could be exchanged for anything the fishermen's country needed.

And here again Lübeck held a position doubly favorable. Not only were her merchants leaders in the fishing trade, but she had at an early date acquired control of the important Lüneburg salt mines. In the salt-lacking Baltic regions all the peasants and urban dwellers became Lübeck customers. And the control of the Lüneburg salt became of even greater importance about 1200 with the development of the huge fisheries in the Sound and along the Scania coast. The herring would have been of little value in itself without the salt that preserved it for transport to distant lands and cities.

When the herring fisheries were at their height in the fourteenth century they numbered 37,500 men and 7,515 boats. (1) Laboring, drinking, quarreling, buying and selling, this mass of sweating humanity appeared as suddenly as it vanished. Although most of the fishermen proper were Danes, each one of the German cities or group of cities had some of their own fishermen. The merchants lived on an allocated lot of shore front or vitte which had its church, living quarters, shops,

(1) Bjork, "The Peace of Stralsund," Speculum, VII (1932), 463.

bar, packing, drying, salting, and smoking rooms. (1) The salting and sale of the fish was done by foreigners. The merchants' daily activities were closely controlled by overseers (Vögte) and subject to strict regulations of the Danish king. (2) One of these stated that "he who had drunk too much must be taken to his bed by a sober youth and must not walk about with a light." (3) Coopers, shoemakers, tailors, saddlers, bakers, stocking weavers, peddlers, and packers were forced to conform to the law, particularly when quarrelsome and drunk. As regards the latter, heavy fines governed weights and prices, false kegs, disposal of entrails, working hours, fast days, and Sundays. English and Scandinavian merchants and fishermen also participated, selling fish or lumber or purchasing salt, beer, grain, linen, and other manufactured goods. The most important participant amid this moveable town of booths and stalls was Lubeck. Above its central store hung the arms of the Schütting (the house of the herring fishermen), representing three herrings.

The merchants in Scania in 1200 came from various German ports, but also from Flanders. In 1300 they came likewise from England, Iceland, and Normandy. It was the common meeting ground of North Sea and Baltic merchants and sailors. (4) According to D. Schäfer, "The Hamburg maritime law considered it a matter-of-course that ships bound for Norway or Scania to fetch the winter fish sail on from there to

(1) Schäfer, Das Buch des Lübeckischen Vögte auf Schonen, H.G.Q., IV, CIV-CXXVI (Introduction), 1927.

(2) Either Swedish or Danish, according to whom Scania might at the time belong.

(3) Hering, Die deutsche Hansa, p. 60.

(4) Streda, Das Schonenfahrergelas in Rostock, p. 116-132, H.G.B. VII, (1890).

England, Flanders, and through the British Channel to the west coast of France where they first of all obtain salt and then wine. The herring fisheries in Baahuslen (1) are visited by many Germans, and principally those from the North Sea cities, but also by men of Hamburg and Bremen, Kampen, and Frisland." In 1384 the Hansa forbade the English and Dutch to participate in the Scania fisheries. (2) They therefore increased their operations in the North Sea, though they continued fishing in the Baltic by sailing both north of Jutland and through the Sound.

Between 1260 and 1267 the Hansa cities obtained trading privileges from Henry III of England. Prior to 1260 merchants from Cologne had formed a Rhenish-Westphalian unit in England. Then, with the growing importance of the Baltic cities, the merchants of Hamburg and Lübeck were permitted to form a trading house similar to that of Cologne. Early in the reign of Edward I these three houses united in a common German Hanse. (3) While British merchants looked with disfavor upon the settlement of the foreign merchants, the Crown did not. In 1303 Edward I issued his charta mercatoria, giving all foreign merchants his protection and the right to trade unhindered (certain wholesale trade alone limited) in return for stipulated export and import payments, particularly export duties on wool and leather. (4) Edward II confirmed the trading privileges of the Hansa in 1311 and granted new privileges in

(1) The sea province, between the present Norwegian frontier and Göteborg, which belonged to Norway until 1658.

(2) H.G.B., X. (1902), 13.

(3) Kunze, Hanseaten aus England, 1275-1412; H.G.Q., IV (1891), 1 (introduction).

(4) H.U., II, 31.

1317. (1) There was further confirmation in 1339, 1342, 1344, and 1345. (2) By these privileges the Hansa were more favored than all other foreigners, and particularly more than the English. (3)

The position of the Germans in England was strengthened by their loans to Edward III at the beginning of the Hundred Years' War. After the great Florentine bankers, the Bardi and Peruzzi failed (1346), a failure largely due to their outstanding loans to the English kings, the Germans came off with the profits. In return for the sums the king borrowed from the German merchants, Edward was obliged to grant them freedom from custom dues, to pledge specific royal revenues, to amortize the debt, and to pawn to them his and his queen's crown jewels which from 1339 to 1344 were deposited in the house of a Cologne merchant. The Bardi reorganized in 1357 and continued to serve Edward III and Richard II, but by 1357 the Germans had virtually supplanted the "Lombards" as the principle royal bankers. (4)

Our knowledge of the trade of the German merchants comes from the lists and account books of the royal customs-house officials, which give us both the nature of exports and imports and the names of the merchants. As in Norway, the king had the first purchase of goods at minimum rates. The principal exports from England were woolen manufactures, hides, tin, and lead. Imports included both Rhine wine and French

(1) H.U., II, 313.

(2) H.U., II, 634, 702; III, 34, 49.

(3) Postan, Studies in English trade in the 15th century, p. 93.

(4) See Bearwood, Alien Merchants in England, 1350-1377, pp. 5-8; Hunke, Hanse, Downing Street und Deutschlands Lebensraum, p. 31.

wine, grains from the Baltic, all kinds of wood, ashes, pitch, tar, fish and furs, butter and lard, metals, linen, steel products, and beer. The Hanseatic merchants had two reasons to thank for their privileged position in England; their efficiency as middlemen between western and eastern Europe, and the expenses incurred by the English kings in the Hundred Years' War. The upper clergy and nobles supported the Hansa against the British merchants, for they wanted the goods the foreigners imported and they wanted to sell their own wool.

The Germans had early developed commercial relations with the principal Dutch trading centers and later the towns of Holland, Frisland, and Overysel had furnished vessels in the Hansa's war against King Waldemar IV of Denmark during 1367 and 1368. While the northerners of the Lowlands seemed more or less like Germans, not so those in Flanders, where merchants assembled from all over Europe, many of them with highly developed business methods and an abundance of money. (1) In 1307 the German Hansa received its charters from the Count and City of Bruges. (2) Flemish industry flowered, manufacturing cotton stuffs, tapestries, velvets, silks, and all kinds of clothing. Various products came from Bruges, Gent, Ypres, Courtrai, Brussels, Antwerp, Tournai, Cambrai, Arras, Lille,

(1) Vogel, "La Hanse," Revue historique, CLXXIX (1937), 12-13.  
 (2) H.U., II, nos. 121, 154. In 1308 the Norwegian Chancellor, Hake, signed a trade agreement on behalf of Haakon V with Flanders and received a present of wax from the city of Bruges (H.U., II, no. 150). The "Street of Norwegians" is mentioned in Bruges in 1308 (H.U., III, nr. 674). The Norsemen must thus already have been well and popularly known in Flanders.

Valenciennes, and Liège, with Bruges as the main staple. (1) The Holland cities of Haarlem, Utrecht, and Amsterdam were scarcely less busy. Bruges' sixty-eight trades and the scientific way her merchants handled their business made even the Lübeck councillors open their eyes wide. They discovered upon their arrival that there was no question of dictating as they had attempted and largely succeeded in elsewhere. The princes of the Dutch states were neither impotent nor feeble and they refused to submit to any foreign legislation or monopolies by the German merchants who were allowed to settle and trade in their dominions. When the Hansa established its Dutch Counter in Bruges it was given certain franchises as well as allowed storehouses in Ghent, Ypres, and Bruges and, somewhat later, in Antwerp. (2) Though Bruges became the most important trading center in northern Europe in the fourteenth century, the Hansa was obliged to content itself with the guarantee of security of person and goods, such as was granted other foreign traders, and the fixing of its market rights and its own weighing house and scales. As far as the North Sea and Baltic trade of the Netherland Hansa cities was concerned, the northern cities naturally enough were more active than those of the more distantly located Flanders. Deventer became the great northern trading post for the entire

(1) Schultz, Die Hanse und England, p. 3.

(2) Ibid., p. 3.



Rhine district and the merchants of Cologne and Frankfurt went there annually to buy Bergen fish and other northern goods; this put Lübeck merchants' noses out of joint. During the latter part of the fourteenth century, Groningen, Stavoren, Leeuwarden (1), Venloo, Dokkum, Kampen, Zwolle, Deventer, Zutphen, Utrecht, Dortrecht, and Middleburg were all members of the Hanseatic League, and all interested in Scandinavian trade.

On Slav soil the German merchants had built a chain of flowering cities, reaching from Lübeck to Riga and Reval. They had made Gotland's old capital, Wisby, practically into a German city. In Novgorod they had supplanted the earlier Russian trader. The Scania fisheries were in their hands. In Denmark and Sweden they had obtained the best of the larger cities trade. In England and Flanders they had established rich Counters and factories. The trade policy consisted mainly in a great number of restrictions of monopolistic character laid down by the Hanse Recesses for all Hansa cities. If these rules were strictly observed, the Hanseatic politicians believed that their efforts would be successful. To make certain of this there was a double control, in the Hansa cities by the Bergenfahrer (2) companies, and abroad by the Counters. (3)

The Hanseatic League became a confederation, in some respects similar to a state. The Westphalian group was joined by Netherland cities under the headship of Cologne which,

(1) J.S., p. 48.

(2) The companies sailing to and trading in Bergen.

(3) The principal foreign trading posts, Novgorod, Wisby, Bergen, London, and Bruges.

with Lubeck, became prima inter pares. Hamburg, Bremen, and Wisby ranked after them in importance. Towns were constantly joining or leaving; membership fluctuated continuously. To the League belonged at one time or another all the important towns in North Germany and their offices in many of the most important ones in the Low countries. During its flourishing period the Hansa probably consisted of some seventy to eighty cities. (1) A great power, De ghemeenen keoplude uten Roomschen Rike van Almanien, thus confronted Scandinavia and the Slavic north and was able for many generations to claim the dominance of the Baltic and the North Sea waters.

(1) The number of members varied considerably throughout the existence of the League. Authors vary in their estimates of the number of members. Sartorius, Geschichte des handeatischen Bundes, II, 126, gives it as seventy-two at the League's most flourishing period.

### CHAPTER III.

#### Bergen: From the Eleventh Century to the Founding of the Bergen Counter

In early days Norway had a number of market towns, the four largest being Bergen, Nidaros (Trondheim), Tønsberg, and Oslo, all lying by the sea. The period of their greatest development was from the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth century. In the eleventh century while the king travelled much around the country, he resided more in Nidaros than elsewhere, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries he seems to have ruled from Bergen. From around 1300 one can say that King Haakon Magnússon considered Oslo as his principal royal residence, for he believed that he could obtain there sufficient supplies for himself and his men and that the location was admirably suited for the export of Norwegian products. The four largest market towns differed from the others in being autonomous communes with their own representative bodies and courts. (1)

According to thirteenth century accounts, which cannot be entirely relied upon, the settlement of Bergen was created a market town by King Olav Kyrre around the year 1075 when it numbered some 1,000 inhabitants, and for several centuries it remained the largest and most important city in Scandinavia or Denmark. Olav Kyrre's Saga says: "Then the

(1) Munch, Det Norske Folks Historie, II, 433-7.  
Nielson, Bergen, p. 4.

market town was founded in Norway, which was more magnificent than all others previously mentioned, except the market town of Nidaros, and this town was called Bergen. Many rich men settled there, and there is the greatest import of foreign goods." (1) The Norman historian Orderic Vitalis, working in the cloister of St. Evroul in France, mentions in 1141 "Berga" as first among Norway's towns (2); and Danish crusaders who visited the town in 1191 found that "Owing to its notable power Bergen was the most renowned town in the land." (3) Around the year 1200 the population of Bergen had perhaps grown to about 5,000. (4)

In the early settlement of Bergen, the King decided upon the streets required, the location of public squares, the necessary wharves and protective stockades, and the best, commanding position for his own castle. (5) The first city ordinances, loosely framed, determined the numbers of various tradesmen and city employees, where they were to erect and locate their shops and stores, how houses were to be constructed, the duties of the night watch. The fire regulations were numerous. The oldest known chief city officials (1159) the Gjaldker, or judge, and his superior the Sysselman, or general royal superintendent and inspector, were both appointed by the king. (6) There were, in addition, twelve councillors and a varying number of city "leaders."

(1) N.S.H., p. 96.

(2) Historia ecclesiastica, X, VI, pp. 27-28, in the edition by A. le Prevost, Paris, 1852. The original manuscript is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

(3) Scriptores rerum Danicarum, V. 353.

(4) H.B., p. 30.

(5) Nicolaysen, Om de norske kjøbstaeder i middelalderen, p. 11.

(6) Nielsen, Bergen, p. 149.

The Gjaldker had charge of everything pertaining to city regulations. He took charge of apprehended thieves and those who had killed or wounded others. The bodies of such as had been killed within the city walls were brought to his house. He likewise looked after the Vaapenting as master of arms. From the fourteenth century on, he was called a Byfogd or city judge. The councillors were chosen by the royal officials.

In addition to his further duties, the Sysselman was expected to keep an eye on the Gjaldker and make certain that he properly executed his many duties.

The two were in charge of everything that pertained to the military duties of the citizens, the Gjaldker and the councillors jointly supervised all city piers and thus came in contact and frequent difficulties with the occupants of the German settlement.

The meeting of all citizens was held three times a year to consider civic matters of importance. A Lagting, or municipal court, was held annually on the first Sunday coming a fortnight after Christmas. For this the Sysselman and Gjaldker named twelve men from each of the four city districts, which with the twelve councillors constituted the court. Representatives of the King and the Bishop of Bergen likewise attended. The duties of the councillors otherwise consisted principally in strengthening the authority of royal officials as well as acting as police.

The public duties of the citizens included: aiding in pulling incoming vessels ashore and shoving them off when departing, taking turns at serving on the night watch, conducting drunkards home, seeing that all good citizens stayed home at Christmas time, serving as watchmen in the tower of St. Nicholas' church, assisting in case of fire, and serving the King when called to arms. If anyone wished to sell his Gaard (1), the King had the prior right of purchase and thereafter the nearest neighbors. If any citizen disappeared for a year and thus fulfilled none of his citizen's duties, his Gaard became the King's. (2)

In January 1276 Magnus Lagaböter revised Bergen's laws along with those of the whole country. The new laws laid principal weight on civil and criminal jurisdiction rather than on the communal constitution. Bergen had its own "thing" or "moot," as it was called in the cities, where all householders met to decide the affairs of the town, but royal officials, much like bailiffs, were present to look after the king's income and exercise police duties. In addition to the general code, Magnus Lagaböter's ordinances contained special laws which differentiated more between the urban and rural regions than had been the case earlier and provided for more local self-government for the cities. The king's officials also functioned in the cities, but the exact relations between the

(1) A Gaard or farm, in modern Norwegian, may mean a single large building or a complex of buildings. The owner by right of his possession became a full-fledged burgher.

(2) Nielsen, Bergen, pp. 249-255.

local and royal authorities is not quite clear. Often, royal sanction of local regulations was obtained. The king likewise issued laws of his own, and a somewhat paternalistic control of the cities naturally became a part of the general policy of centralizing the government in the hands of the king. (1) The council which governed the city was elected by the members of a guild merchant, which corresponded to the guild merchant in the cities of England and of continental countries. The members were the owners of a city Gaard and with them must be grouped professional merchants and shipowners engaged in foreign trade who formed a new and firmly substantial though not especially wealthy class. The laws were to be enforced by a body of eight councillors, chosen for one year, and a representative from each of the four city quarters. (2) Rents, tithes, and taxes were all paid in kind. (3)

In addition to the king, a few great landowners and people attracted to the king's service lived there. The clergy played a most important role, owning a considerable amount of the land; their head, the bishop, was second only to the king in authority and importance. The Bishop of Bergen took his residence in that city in 1170. He was fully as occupied trading as attending to church matters. According

(1) Nielsen, Bergen, pp. 79, 151-154.

(2) N.G.L., III, 150; ibid., II, 188.

(3) Munthe, Audin Hugleikson og kong Eirik Magnussón. B.H.F.S., XXXVIII (1937) 181.

to numerous English letters, the principal traders of this early period were the king, the secular prelates, the abbots, and the great landowners. (1) The Archbishop of Nidaros was the largest ship-broker in the country.

Bergen's city laws provided carefully for the regulation of trade. They stipulated where in Bergen trading was to take place, what disposition was to be made of ship-wrecked goods, and under what conditions cattle might be purchased in the surrounding countryside. One of Magnus Lagaböter's city ordinances limited the number of traders: "Owing to the present shortage in labor in our country districts it is hereby ordained that no one may turn to trade who does not possess ten marks in weight. In order to insure that this our law be respected, we hereby order the Judge of our court to thoroughly investigate the matter every summer and this we order owing to our suspicion that our revenue officers and other deputies may not prove unbribable, whereby the peasants of our realm lose their requisite farm-hands."

(1) The Speculum regale gives an interesting picture of the Norwegian merchant's life in the thirteenth century. The high-born father, in referring to merchants, says: "They often belong to the best class. But it makes a great difference whether they are true merchants or tricksters or cheats and buy or sell falsely." It also recounts that a merchant tells his son: "If you wish to perfect yourself in knowledge, then learn all languages, but do not forget your own language." There are further qualifications for the profession: "The merchant's goods must be fresh and, when purchased, carefully examined, and at all sales and purchases witnesses should be present. A merchant must be familiar with the Norwegian law and must know languages, particularly Latin and French. He must also be a good sailor, familiar with everything pertaining to the sea, and he must know the art of figures. He must know how to gain the favor of kings and chieftains, and take with him when sailing all that is needed for repairs to his vessels and sails." In another passage the Speculum regale informs us that it was the usual custom for high-born youths, owning property, to spend some of their youthful years on trading



In March 1295, King Eirik, who had stayed on in Bergen after Christmas, published his well-known Retterbot (Laws) (1) which contained among other ordinances the following: "Be it hereby forbidden our own or foreign merchants in this our realm to form either union or conspiracy or to pass their own laws or ordinances, such is solely our royal right and that of our councillors, and the assumption of such rights by others will entail the loss of all their chattels. Pilots, goldsmiths, laborers, ironsmiths, Englandfahrrers (2), apprentices, laborers, servant girls, and regular drinking associations are one and all hereby forbidden to form either guilds or unions. Be it known however that this our ordinance excepts charitable associations similar to those of St. Mary's, St. Nicholas', and St. Jasmund's." (3) In 1299 it was ordained for the first time that all trading should be concentrated in the trading towns.

The law also defined the status and obligations of the "winter-sitters" who, in return for the privilege of remaining in the city from September 14th to May 30th, were expected, trips abroad, in order to acquire education and book knowledge and then later enter the government service or retire to their estates.

Though the Speculum regale was a medieval work written in the form of a conversation between a father and a son and describes the life of the various classes of society at the time, the writer is unknown. It was written around 1250.

(1) N.G.L., III, nos. 24, 25.

(2) Ibid., no. 2.

(3) Ibid.

upon occasion, to be called for military service and to make payments to the king. Winter-sitters were also restricted in the exchange of commodities: "Such foreigners as sit here during the winter and do not bring flour, malt, or rye, shall purchase neither butter, furs, nor dried fish between the Cross masses (September 14th to May 30th)." (1)

One of the principal difficulties in everyday intercourse of medieval life was that of trading. Only the people of a town had the right to buy and sell unhindered in trade with their own merchants. Foreign merchants were originally considered to have no rights whatever and any commercial dealings they might undertake were rigorously regulated, as was the entire conduct of strangers and guests. By the special favor of the sovereign the foreign merchant or group of traders or guild might, in return for corresponding favors, obtain the right to trade, but such right was not transferable, and if granted by one sovereign might be entirely abrogated by his successor or annulled if war or serious disagreements arose. Laws against strangers, going back to the middle of the twelfth century, grew steadily in importance and were intensified in Germany and Italy in the thirteenth century, in close connection with the development of the staple policy.

(1) These were largely Germans carrying Norwegian products to England and returning with English, French, and Flemish goods acquired in English ports.

The earliest German merchants arriving in Norway from the Rhine districts, Saxony, and Westphalia, were replaced little by little by those from the Wendish cities. (1) Bremen had been raised to an archbishopric with ecclesiastical supremacy over the North after the Vikings had destroyed Hamburg. For a while thereafter Bremen remained the largest city in northwest Germany. In the thirteenth century twenty-two prominent Bremen merchants affirmed upon oath that they had visited Norway more often than any others. (2)

That the German merchants were not entirely welcome in Norway is evidenced in the speech made by King Sverre (3) in Bergen in the year 1186: (4)

We thank all Englishmen because they came here, those who brought wheat and honey, flour and cloth. And we further thank all those who have brought linen and flax, wax and kettles. And we also mention amicably those who have come here from the Orkney or Shetland or Faroe Islands or Iceland, and all those who have brought here to this country such things as we cannot do without and which are of use to this country. But the German men who have come here in great numbers and in great boats wish to take away butter and codfish and their export is of great ruin to the country. Instead of these they bring wine, which the people have begun to buy, both my men and men of the town and merchants. Much ill has resulted from such purchases, but no good. Owing to this, many have lost their lives, some their limbs, some are damaged for their entire life, others have suffered disgrace, have been wounded or beaten, and this all comes from too much drink. I owe these German merchants much ingratitude for their behavior, and if they wish to retain their lives and property they better leave at once. Their errand has been of little benefit to us or our kingdom.

(1) J.S., p. 54.

(2) Bremischer Urkundenbuch, I, 444.

(3) 1177-1202.

(4) From Chap. 104 of the Sverre Saga. The first part of the Sverre Saga was written by an Icelandic Benedictine abbot, Karl Johnson, living temporarily in Tingeyre Cloister in Nordland. The saga was finished after his death. It was written at the King's order as Sverre sat beside the writer and dictated what he was to put down. Sars, Samlede Vaerker, p. 7.

The first of the German artisans to settle in Bergen, the shoemakers, arrived before 1250 and were shortly followed by tailors, bakers, goldsmiths, and furriers. They not only did better work than the Norwegians, owing to their excellent guild training, but in the variety of their production they outdid the natives. (1) During the twelfth century great progress had been made in the finishing and sewing of leather shoes and leggings, known to the Germans, but still a closed book to the Norwegians. (2) In 1330 King Magnus rented his place Vaagsbotn to the shoemakers. It was situated on the narrow south end of the bay. They were forbidden to live elsewhere and they had to be ready at all times to furnish forty-four armed men. (3) The shoemakers or Schuster as they were called, often whether shoemakers or not, tanned their own leather. As a result their neighborhood stank and, apart from the bellicose tendencies of the inhabitants, was considered undesirable. From the time of their arrival they all lived together in one large building and drank together in the evening in their Schötstue or club-house. They were organized in De fif Amten. (4) Between the houses and sales booths of the artisans and the water front lay the fish market. With the increase in their power and insolence, the artisans refused

- (1) H.U., IV, no. 177.
- (2) Bugge, Norges Historie, p. 72.
- (3) H.U., II, no. 495.
- (4) B.H.F.S., no. 52 (1946) p. 103.  
Hagelssun, Gamle Möller i Bergen, p. 103.

the natives admission to the market until all Germans had purchased whatever they desired. If natives attempting to trade there before this had been accomplished they were received with fisticuffs, clubs, and stones when entering the market's sole gate, that leading to Shoemaker Street. Natives might at times purchase food the artisans had obtained from the surrounding farms to resell at higher prices. (1) The shoemakers are often referred to by historians (excepting the Germans) as "trouble makers," a wild and lawless lot who treated their Norwegian neighbors with the greatest brutality but were always shielded and defended whenever complaints were made to the Hanseatic League. (2)

In addition to the conflicts between natives and Germans, both merchants and artisans, there was considerable tension in the middle of the thirteenth century between Bergen and Lübeck. In 1247 Lübeck pirates attacked Norwegian merchantmen bound for Wisby and Lübeck and fishing along Scania. Exasperated at this, King Haakon Haakonsson (1217-1263) seized the German vessels in Bergen. Cardinal William of Sabina, who was in Bergen, begged the King not to make innocent men suffer for the criminal acts of the pirates. The King agreed and correspondence ensued between him and the Lübeck Council. (3) Lübeck offered excuses and the King wrote in reply as follows (somewhat condensed):

- (1) Sartorius, Geschichte des hanseatischen Bundes, p. 336.
- (2) Taranger, Norges historie, III<sup>2</sup>, pp. 17-18.
- (3) D.N., V, nos. 1-3, Haakon Haakonsson's Saga, Chap. 161. Flateyjarbok, III, pp. 118-119.

We have received your letter, full of excuses, phrased in polite and detailed words, giving complaints for complaints. But it does not seem to us that you have satisfied our honor or the demands of our subjects, many of whom have suffered grievously on account of your actions, that is, unless restitution should later be made. Nothing is dearer to us or pleasanter than to live in peace and friendship with those who themselves wish to live in peace and unanimity with us, which does not merely mean fine words but genuine and praiseworthy deeds. You who are guardians of the territory of the sea in question, permit our merchants who bring you their wares to be plundered by your people and hired soldiers, almost within your very harbors, and gather at one and the same time both the plunder and the robbers in your city and protect them both. Merchants should be able to travel in peace to, and remain among you, as safely as to a friendly fortress. If they are plundered by the Danes, we would not make complaints to you. You have reproached us with some of our people having taken your citizen Bernhard's ship, which sank in the harbor of Tónsberg. But you know what usage permits in the treatment of the shipwrecked, or rather what shameful and ungodly abuse, and we wish that this were changed for the better on all shores. For the sake of friendship we have caused all goods that belonged to the aforementioned Bernhard to be returned to him. But in regard to what you say, namely that your people are forbidden to enjoy freely the privileges we granted them, that may well be, and owing to the fact that you withhold just the same privileges which previously have been received from you. As you now, however, earnestly pray and say that you will honestly renew entirely friendly relations with us, we desire the same with equally great sincerity, that is, if you show by your deeds in an honest and fitting manner what you promise by words. For you may be certain that we, in our realm, will not fail your men in what is right, but in everything fitting you will find us helpful, if you retain your friendly intercourse with us. Thus, send your ships to us during the summer with the usual goods, necessary to our realm, grain and malt, and allow our merchants the same freedom to purchase the same articles, as long as the scarcity of provisions lasts in Norway, and what your merchants find to their advantage, we will not forbid them to obtain. But we absolutely refuse to allow our merchants to obtain Lübeck beer, except such amounts as are needed for drinking during the voyage, for the country has little benefit from their drinking.

The letter remained unanswered, probably because the Lubeckers had no idea of fulfilling their side of the bargain and granting the Norwegians free trading privileges in their

city. Lübeck retained all export for its own merchants and German allies. For that reason Lübeckers had probably quietly watched Norwegian vessels hunted and robbed in Lübeck waters.

Haakon wrote again in 1248 to the Lübeck Council. When he still received no answer, he turned to Emperor Frederick II. That helped. The Emperor threatened to give Lübeck to the Norwegian King. This produced an abject apology from the Councillors, and their envoy, Johannes de Bardewick, "placed the matter humbly in King Haakon's hands." (1) The upshot of the affair was the Norwegian-Lübeck treaty of 1250: (2)

To all believers in Christ, both present and future, who will hear or see this letter, Haakon, by the Grace of God King of Norway, sends his greeting in the name of the Savior of all. We desire that it be well known to all of you, despite the fact that much dissension has occurred and various grievances have arisen between our country and Lübeck (the Lord says in his Gospel, blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God), it has pleased us and our Councillors and the distinguished representatives sent by you, to humbly consider and determine by arbitration all the above matters of dispute and complaint. And this has been determined out of piety as also because mediation, aided by the Lord, oft results in continual friendship. We do so particularly owing to your having sent us your trustworthy ambassadors, the honorable gentlemen Johannes of Bardewick and others. We desire that in the future everything be peacefully adjusted and with forgiveness give cheerful and benevolent consideration to all matters. And as it is wise to alter what is unsatisfactory to what pleases, and to secure firmly what has been well begun, it has seemed requisite to us that the peace, which has been agreed upon between our country and your city, shall likewise be observed in the future between our men and your citizens wherever they may meet and that a league of mutual peace be, by God's grace, retained between us in times to come. We therefore decide that whenever our and your men in the future come alongside with their goods, they are to freely arrive and sail and be received mutually with good will and friendliness and their persons and wares shall be

(1) D.N., V. no. 4; A.B., II, 332.

(2) Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lubeck, I, no. CLVII, (Oct. 6, 1250).  
D.N., V, no. 3.

treated peacefully. We have also decided that if persons from your city are ever attacked or hurt by their enemies, the men of our country, if present, shall according to their best ability help and protect them like friends and brothers. And it is decided that the same support and assistance be given our people. In addition we wish and permit the merchants of your city, who come to our dominions, to enjoy privileges and rights equal to the best ever granted in our country. But if ever anyone should, which God forbid, dare to violate this treaty concluded between us, our treaty shall not for that reason be abrogated or declared invalid, but those who have acted so impudently shall either receive fitting retribution or be compelled to make complete amends for the harm done or the injuries caused, in order that the present statute remain true and inviolate. In order that this peace treaty remain inviolate we have strengthened it by affixing our seal and that of our son, Haakon the Young.

These negotiations and the agreement reached were of durable importance to Norway, particularly in the future development of Bergen. The treaty was the legal foundation for future relations with Lübeck and marks the turning point not only for Norwegian trade but also for the kingdom's political history. Unfortunately Norwegians did not realize clearly how future relations might develop. Norway continued to appear not only as Lübeck's equal in all respects but as its superior, and the King as having granted the terms which Lübeck had humbly requested. Both the King and his councillors believed the treaty would prove as profitable to Norway as to Lübeck. (1)

But important economic factors contributed mightily to the superior position of Lübeck during the thirteenth century. We first hear of a change in balance of Norwegian trade about the middle of the thirteenth century, but during the previous century there had developed a need for the importation of important means of sustenance in exchange for the

(1) Nielsen, Bergen, p. 183.



Norwegian dried fish. From this time on Norway required the regular import of bread stuffs.

When the Lübeckers and their Baltic neighbors during the thirteenth century were able to displace the West-Germans in Bergen, this was due to their control of the Baltic supply of grain, for the region of the Rhine did not then produce a superfluity of that important product, and the countries of the lower Rhine as well as Norway became importers of Baltic grains. Fish no longer controlled the barter market; the merchants who controlled grain had the upper hand.

Neither could England compete with the Baltic cities for Norway's trade. For, despite the fact that the Norwegian government was well disposed and tried to get its grain requirements supplemented by England, particularly when at war with Lübeck, English merchants could never guarantee regular annual deliveries. Nevertheless, English competition was duly taken into account and feared by the Hanseatic merchants in Bergen.

The specific economic shifts that brought about these conditions were chiefly shifts in population both in Norway and in the Baltic regions. The great Northland fisheries developed as a result of the demands of Central-European cities, and the rise of the trade resulted in the new grain trade half a century later. Most of the grain shipped to Bergen went on to North Norway where the fishing population had increased to such a degree that it could no longer be fed

by local production. This rise in the fishing population can in turn only be explained by the increased demand for dried fish during the decades in question. In fact, the growth of the Nordland population corresponded with the German expansion east to the Elbe and probably, to a certain extent, depended upon it. The German peasants and urban citizens around the Baltic constituted new purchasers of Norwegian fish in addition to the earlier existing ones of West and South Germany. The Lübeck grain traders had thus good reason to pursue the Bergen trade in the middle of the thirteenth century, as they found plenty of purchasers. The sale of salt, Scania fish, and dried fish went hand in hand.

The relations between Norway and Lübeck and the other German cities seem in the years following 1250 to have been good, and trade prospered; the Germans were becoming more and more indispensable. No particularly disturbing incident occurred during King Haakon's reign. The manner in which the German merchants are mentioned in the city ordinances of 1276 seems to take them for granted and as if no particular mode of treating them was required. This assumed that they conformed to the country's laws. Such an arrangement did not, however, suit the Germans. They wanted the privileges of the Norwegians but not their duties. In 1276 two Lübeck councillors were sent to King Magnus (VI, the son of Haakon IV, 1263-1280) to influence him on behalf of their merchants. They obtained a letter of privileges, the first granted to German

merchants in Norway, which gave them immunities and concessions not enjoyed by the natives. (1) The reasons for this were the necessity to obtain sufficient supplies of breadstuffs, and Norway's difficult relations with Denmark. This letter granting special privileges is dated 1278 and read as follows: (2)

Magnus, by the grace of God King of Norway, sends to faithful believers in Christ, who this letter may reach, his greeting in the name of the Lord. It is fitting for our Royal Majesty to honor with particular benefits those who faithfully and solicitously have protected our Majesty's honor and the services of our subjects. We have therefore upon the request and prayer of the Councillors and citizens of many German ports, but especially upon the humble request of our friends, the Burgomaster, Councillors and citizens of the city of Lübeck, presented to us by the wise and honorable Councillor Herrik Skenken and Alexander (3), graciously deemed it proper and to the honor of God and of service to them to grant certain privileges to such merchants of German speech as come, either as guests or travellers, to our kingdom with their wares.

Firstly, as a mark of our bountiful grace and with the agreement of our Councillors and the wise men of our realm, we have granted that the previously mentioned merchants, guests, and travellers who do not rent lodgings for a whole or half a year, shall not be compelled to serve on the night watch.

Secondly, we ordain that perjurers or other dishonorable persons shall be prohibited from bearing witness against said Germans.

Thirdly, as a mark of our bountiful grace, we grant them permission to freely trade in retail in all goods on the wharves, streets or alleys, usually called smaavarninger and to trade in all manner of hides, when these do not comprise a deker, also butter as long as this does not amount to nine lober, during the entire period between St. Halvard's and St. Mary's mass. (4)

Fourthly, we grant the aforesaid merchants, guests and travellers, exemption from hauling vessels ashore, unless their size is such that their own crew are unable to do so. In such case the Germans shall be encouraged to help in a friendly manner.

(1) Nielsen, Vedtaekter og Dokumenter fra det Hanseatiske kontor i Bergen og dets enkelte gaarde, p. 174.

(2) D.N., V, no. 10.

(3) The original document gives no other name. Nielsen, Bergen, p. 175.

(4) May 15th to August 15th.

Fifth, we have granted our Sysselmen and other officials permission to permit the merchants to sell their wares to whomever they please for a period of three days. The period is to be reckoned from the time the officials have been notified of the wares the merchants have to sell. On the days of such notification the officials are to notify the merchants what they wish to set aside for the King's table and to come to agreement as to the price. Such regulation will remain in force as long as no general prohibition has been issued in regard to the removal of goods from one place to another.

Sixth, we have strictly ruled that all Germans who have suffered shipwreck shall unhindered retain all such of their goods as they have with God's assistance and their own efforts managed to salvage. No foolhardy person shall venture to seize them as long as their rightful owners have not abandoned them.

Seventh, we have ordained that no German merchant, who has pledged his appearance in court and to accept its judgment, be chained or thrown into prison for debt or other misdemeanor, unless this be so great that death or the chopping off of hands is prescribed by the law.

Eighth, as love teaches us to give grace to those who have suffered the greatest perils, all shipwrecked persons who cannot by their own efforts salvage their belongings, are permitted to call for assistance in their own district or skibsrede, from as many persons as they consider requisite, and such are to be paid for their work six Norwegian öres for every last salvaged. Those assisting in saving the vessel and its fittings should be given a remuneration to be determined by reasonable, disinterested persons. He who refuses to assist, when legally called, shall be punished by law.

Ninth, as we also wish all the above to remain in force and not to be violated, as long as we receive the customary fidelity, we order our Sysselman and other officials, in case they wish to escape our displeasure, to assist in carrying out all the aforementioned privileges and ordinances.

Tenth, in order that such privileges should also be accorded our subjects, we have ordered and firmly impressed upon the judges in our realm that they should treat such citizens as come to Norway with their wares with a certain partiality, causing them no difficulties, and see that they are accorded justice when they complain and that their oppressors are severely punished, and that the Lübeck citizens are shown all possible favor and good will whenever this may justly and honestly be done.

In order that these our friendly concessions and the grace we have shown shall have lasting force we have given this document validity by confirming it with our seal.

In the following year the merchants of Bremen received a similar charter. While the English pursued their trade with

Norway energetically, the German charters made their recipients dangerous rivals.

King Magnus Haakonsson Lagabøter died in 1280 and was succeeded by his son Eirik Praestehader. (1) The regency, which governed during Eirik's youth, attempted to curb the German merchants in Norway. All Germans with the exception of the winter-sitters were forbidden to buy butter, skins, or cod, or to buy or sell in country districts, and the artisans were permitted to purchase only what they needed for their own use. Then, in 1284, Alf Erlingson, a Norwegian nobleman turned pirate, captured some German and Danish vessels. In retaliation the German cities closed their harbors to Norwegians and refused to export German goods to Norway. The embargo was successful. Norwegian cities lacked food, and in 1285 the King wrote a propitiatory letter to the German cities offering restitution and renewal of earlier privileges. (2) The result was the Kalmar Treaty of 1285. The treaty provided that Norway must return all seized vessels and property, pay an indemnity of 6,000 marks of Norwegian silver to the German cities that had fought together, and grant German merchants all their old privileges and conditions more favorable than those enjoyed by Norway's own merchants. (3) The indemnity proved so onerous that in 1294 Norway was forced to concede further privileges to the Germans, being unable to raise what

(1) Priest-hater.

(2) Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lübeck, I, no. CDLXXI (March 13, 1285).

(3) H.U. I, 339.

remained of the payment. Following are the clauses of the treaty that was signed in 1294 and that formed the basis of all future intercourse between the Hansa and Norway: (1)

(1) When the Germans come to the cities or market towns in the realm, they may freely lay up to the wharves without asking the permission of the officials, but that should announce on the same or next day what kinds of goods they have brought, and ask permission to place them in warehouses, which should not be denied them. For three days the King's representative is to have the right to purchase at reasonable prices what he believes is required for use by the King. If this has been done within the stipulated time the Germans may sell freely what remains. After the Germans have entered the city limits, they must sell their goods. They may also take them wherever they wish, inside or outside the realm, but not north of Bergen unless given special dispensation to do so.

(2) Every vessel bringing rye or wheat to any city shall upon arrival give, in payment of duty, a ship's pound (2) of the best quality on board, to be selected by the royal officials. This requirement does not apply to flour.

(3) The Germans are not required to haul vessels ashore, excepting those belonging to the King.

(4) If any German dies inside the kingdom of Norway, his belongings shall be transmitted to his heir if his

(1) D.N. X, no. 23.

(2) 160 kilograms.

legal representative produces a witnessed letter from the deceased's city within a year and a half after the day of death.

(5) The Germans are not obliged to produce their arms (at reunions of arms) nor to accompany thieves or other criminals condemned to death.

(6) German merchants who have sold their merchandise and are cleared for sailing before Christmas shall be free from clearance payments. If later they are forced by storm to lay up in any city of the kingdom they shall also be free from all taxes, provided they neither buy nor sell in that city.

(7) German merchants may store their goods wherever convenient in the cities but they may sell them only in designated places.

(8) The Germans may charter their vessels to others for sailing to such places as they are permitted to visit, but they cannot be forced to rent their vessels to others.

(9) If a German, about to sail, is sued for a debt or minor offense, which generally is settled by a determined sum of money called in Norwegian taksetning, he may place the matter in the hands of the host of his lodgings and two countrymen who have their own vessels lying by the wharves but not ready to sail, with an amount sufficient to make good the sum or fines demanded.

(10) Germans are to be freed from guard and night-watch duty.

(11) No German's chest may be ransacked without suspicion of fraud or theft.

(12) The so-called punder steu (scales) shall be deposited under guard in a safe public place, easily accessible when anything is to be weighed; and it is to be of the same weight as in olden times and as determined by law.

(13) If German traders have been shipwrecked within the kingdom they are to have the right to collect their belongings, either themselves or through others, and to retain ownership of goods and vessel until they freely abandon them as wrecked.

(14) When one of the crew has committed a crime he is to be punished according to the law (but no innocent person in his stead), unless he is punished according to the law of his own country, or unless the locality, where the crime has been proved to have been committed, knowingly avoids condemning him or forcibly protects him.

(15) A city shall not be responsible for an individual crime unless, despite being informed, it neglects to exercise justice.

(16) Any German accused in a matter that cannot be legally proved against him shall, if possible, free himself by oath taken jointly with persons who are his equals in rank and position and who, according to the opinion of the judge and the nature of the crime, would probably not know the truth in the matter.

(17) In all civil and criminal suits against the citizens of the cities no one but well-reputed people shall be called as witnesses.



(18) If any Norwegian merchant does not fetch the goods that he has purchased from the Germans, but has made a deposit the same day as the purchase, the seller or owner shall have the right to resell the goods later to anybody. This right does not include goods purchased for the King's mansion.

All this was granted on condition that the same liberties were allowed the Norwegians, that the agreement was firmly maintained by the cities, and that full restitution was made for injustice and harm done Norwegian citizens.

During the following year, 1295, King Eirik published his Retterbod in which he pointed to the disorders in Bergen and expressed his dissatisfaction with the conduct of the German merchants. (1) King Eirik was not against foreigners trading in Norway, but he was against their breaking the country's laws. He insisted for a time upon the German merchants' taking no wares north of Bergen, and exporting no fish without a corresponding value in malt, flour, and grain being imported. The object of all his rules was to protect domestic retail trade. (2)

Hitherto Norway had been an important naval power. The fleet had been her main strength in war — as necessary to the maintenance of her political power and independence, as her merchant marine and commerce were to her economic well-being. After 1300 Norwegian merchants began to be driven from the seas.

(1) N.G.L., III, 24-25.

(2) Hasund, Det Norske Folks Historie, III, 64.

The decline in their merchantmen inevitably involved a decline in Norwegian naval power and consequently in the political importance and freedom of action of the country.

In Norway the German merchants by dogged persistence and ruthless methods were slowly pushing their English competitors out of the way. Under Haakon V Magnussón (1299-1319) they had acquired a considerable portion of the dried fish trade (1), even exporting to England what the English needed. On the other hand political events played into their hands, while on the other the English could not vie with the economic superiority of the Hansa. King Haakon and Edward II fell out when Haakon sided with Robert Bruce of Scotland in the hope of winning back for Norway the Hebrides and the Isle of Man. (2) Added to this, the Norwegian citizens of Tønsberg suspected that various murders there were attributable to English merchants. As a result, the suspects were held by the royal authorities, and King Edward in 1315 wrote demanding their release as well as that of English ships laden with herring, "for," said King Edward, "they had nothing to do with the slaying of the Knight from Vikia (3) (Oslo), but have been most villainously slandered." A few years later, King Haakon received another letter from England complaining that the Hansa denied the English trading both in Bergen and Scania. (4) Their accusations were quite correct, for not only had the

(1) Overaas og Midgaards, Norges Historie, p. 58.

(2) N.U., p. 40.

(3) Munch, Det Norske folks historie, Vol. 4<sup>2</sup>, p. 576.

(4) Hakluyt, I, p. 169.

Germans become masters of Norwegian domestic commerce (1), but also of Norwegian trade with England and France. Haakon V pursued a definitely anti-English policy which brought frequent clashes between English and Norwegian merchants. English ships were confiscated, merchants arrested, and goods appropriated. Haakon felt that Norway no longer needed English traders. The English complained that they were not granted the trading privileges accorded to their feared and hated German rivals. (2)

Little by little the Germans went beyond the privileges granted them in 1294, and in 1301 they were called to task for this, particularly for trading outside the city and for failing to pay the dues they owed when they remained later than Christmas. King Haakon V reproached them in his *Retterbod*. (3) In 1302 he again forbade foreigners to trade north of Bergen. His opinion of the Germans is revealed in his referring to them as "murderers and robbers, who stayed in his country without permission." In 1306-07 the artisans in Bergen attempted to evade paying tithes. Bishop Arne had the leaders excommunicated. The case was put in the hands of the court which in 1311 passed judgment against them.

Haakon complained that the German merchants brought only beer and other deplorable things and in their place exported such indispensable articles as stock-fish (4) and butter.

(1) Allen, De tre nordiske rigers historie, p. 37.

(2) Nielsen, Bergen, p. 190.

(3) N.G.L., III, pp. 42, 55, 134.

(4) Dried cod.

Therefore, during the 1315-1316 famine years he placed duties on everything, varying from 1/48th to 1/12th of their value (1), and stock-fish and butter could be exported only by the merchant who had landed flour or malt or other "heavy goods." (2) Haakon also ruled that no foreign merchant might remain in Oslo, Bergen, or Tønsberg beyond the time fixed by law. (3) According to J. E. Sars, "Haakon V worked energetically and evidently not without progress in attempting to assist his own merchants and put a limit to the encircling German commercial domination." (4) He imposed a number of exacting limitations on foreigners' trade, placed high duties on their exports, forbade them to sell retail, or a guest to trade with another guest, and permitted them to remain in the country during the winter only on condition that they performed all that the country's own citizens were obliged to do. (5)

Haakon V died in 1319; he was the last male descendant of Haarrald Haarfagre. (6) His nearest heir was his daughter's son Magnus.

During Magnus Eirikson's reign the Germans continued to disregard the laws. The winter-sitters were the principal offenders. In 1340-1341 tension between the Germans and the

(1) H.U., II, 117.

(2) Hering, Die deutsche Hanse, p. 68.

(3) Nielsen, Bergen, p. 191.

(4) Bugge, Norges Historie, II, 361-2.

(5) Sars, Ubsigt over den Norske Historie, III, 4, and 79.

(6) Sars, Samlede Vaerker, II, 78.

citizens of Bergen led to rioting. Nothing resulted from negotiations and in 1342 King Magnus ordered the Germans out of Bergen. But, they returned the following year when the peace of Helsingborg was concluded between King Magnus and King Waldemar IV, Atterdag, of Denmark, by which King Waldemar renounced his rights to Scania and his feudal rights in South Halland in return for 8,000 silver marks to be paid by King Magnus. At a later date King Waldemar refused to sign and seal the final agreement, stating he was too busy to do so, with the result that no payment was made and Scania remained Danish. (1)

(1) Bugge, Norges Historie, III, 72.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Bergen Counter: As a Political Unit, 1343-1450

By the 1340's the settlement of the German merchants at Bergen had begun to assume what was to be for the next century its characteristic form. It went by the name of Comtoir or office and by the average Bergen citizen as "the Lice Wharf" owing to the adhesive qualities of its occupants. It consisted of a series of building-complexes all built of wood and separated by passages some nine to ten feet wide, closed at each end. (1) Up to the sixteenth century the wooden exteriors were heavily coated with tar. (2) The facades of the buildings faced the harbor where the Gaards had their individual piers for vessels to moor and dock. Each building complex or Gaard had a name, such as the Unicorn, the Golden Shoe, the Sun Court, the Sisters, or the name of its owner; it also had its particular banner and device. There were at first twenty-two Gaards, thirteen belonging to St. Mary's parish and nine to St. Martin's. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries thirteen more were added.

The houses were all built on one pattern. The ground floor was divided into sales rooms, the second floor contained

(1) The facades were some sixty feet wide and the entire Gaard some 330 feet deep. The Finnegaard consisted of fifteen units, with a total of fifty-seven rooms.

(2) The Hanseatic statute was published in 1572 reading: "Niemand soll die Häusser inwendig oder auswendig pechen odor thieren."

living rooms and the offices and bedrooms of the superiors, as well as visitors' rooms, and the third, the bedrooms of the journeymen (1) and clerks. The kitchen, storerooms, and cellars were at the rear, which backed out onto a disreputable, though much frequented, narrow street, Overgaten (the upper street), lined with brothels and beer rooms.

In each Gaard there were from five to fifteen so-called families, generally consisting of bachelors from the same city but at different stages in the merchant profession. Each Gaard (2) was an administrative unit with its own gartenrecht (garden law) and cabbage patch behind it and was under the command of a Hausmeister (house-steward or monitor) who kept order and was responsible for thrashing or fining the youths whenever punishment was deserved. The occupants of a Gaard lived by themselves during the summer, fraternizing with others only on important occasions. During the winter, however, they took their meals together in the Schötstue or club house (3), the members of each Gaard at their own separate tables, after which they joined around the central fire until an appointed hour.

Each Gaard had its administration and court. Some rules were common to all, others governed the individual Gaards. The findings of the Gaard could be appealed to the Counter's

(1) The journeymen or Gesellen had charge of the stores and were the merchants' right-hand men, directing the other German workmen. Nielsen, Bergen, p. 239.

(2) H.B., pp. 29-39; Nielsen, Bergen, p. 240; Holberg, Bergen, p. 172.

(3) Four of these still remain among the buildings of the Hansa settlement. The Schötstue was an old Norwegian institution, as was also the Ildstue, or common kitchen, both being common for a large built-up complex, and both were adopted by the German merchants in building their quarters. Nielsen, Bergen, p. 239.

council, or in special cases, even to the councillors of the Lubeck Bergenfahrer which generally ruled with the utmost severity, imposing penalties including loss of membership in the Hanseatic League, or even death itself.

The Schötstue (1) had windows at one end, first lit through skins and later glazed. Here were held the banquets and the games of initiation, and here drinking, dancing, and singing were permitted when warranted by the occasion. In the center of the hall stood a large serving table for food and drink and the various beer cans and mugs, and from there prayers were read to those seated on benches lining the walls. The Schötstue was used during the winter months as a school-room for the boys, who were instructed in writing, arithmetic, and knowledge of articles of trade. Elections and court proceedings were also held there. By the fifteenth century each Gaard had its own clubhouse and merchants' hall where the household generally assembled on winter evenings. It was heated three times a day from the adjacent Ildstue (kitchen). (2) A hole in the roof of the kitchen permitted the smoke to escape from the fire burning wood and peat on the stone platform directly underneath the roof. (3)

The entire settlement was guarded by trained watchdogs supposed to keep out undesirable, unexpected persons and hinder anyone from stealing out at night to the allurements of

(1) H.B., pp. 24, 26; Holberg, Bergens Beskrivelse, p. 175.

(2) H.B., pp. 21, 27.

(3) Not until 1702 was the hearth replaced by stoves.



Overgaten. "The dogs were uncommonly large. They lay quietly during the daytime, letting people pass, but at night they were like wild beasts and permitted no strangers to enter the Wharf." (1) The German settlement was guarded by dogs from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century.

The Counter in Bergen was shut off from the town and locked up at night to prevent the natives of the city from gaining admittance, the Germans rather than the burghers exercising control. The whole procedure of the German merchants was just the reverse of their staple policy at home in Lübeck, where everything was directed (2) against the free movement of foreign merchants.

Among the German artisans in Bergen the shoemakers were the most numerous. In 1379 they came to an agreement with the German merchants by which they were to be entirely under the orders of the Counter. This understanding remained in force until 1450 when they were placed by Christiern I under Norwegian jurisdiction.

In 1343 King Magnus Erikson restored to the German merchants the privileges granted in 1294 by King Haakon V, and referred to them for the first time of which we have any record as "mercatores de Hanse theutonicorum." The Bergen King Magnus Erikson complained to the German cities about the behavior of the mercatores de civitatibus maritimes dictos

(1) Holberg, Bergens Beskrivelse, p. 162.

(2) D.N., I, 182.

(3) Hering, Die deutsche Hanse, p. 69.

hense brodere. (1) This name indicates that the Germans in Bergen were organized as a brotherhood (as in England).

The Counter was organized by Lübeck merchants primarily, though Hamburg, Bremen, Wismar, and Stralsund traders were not barred from membership in it or from enjoying its trading privileges. (2) The members of the Bergen Counter were not independent; in all their actions they were subject to Lübeck, their home city. In this the Bergen Counter differed significantly from the Counters in other cities. Through years of conflict and negotiations the German merchants succeeded in freeing themselves entirely from the jurisdiction of the country and city in which they operated. The trading laws issued by the Hanseatic League supplanted the Norwegian ones as those of technically superior merchants. After the year 1400 the Hanseatic business law prevailed on the shores of the North Sea and the Baltic from Bruges to Novgorod, in Stockholm, Wisby, Copenhagen, and Oslo. (3)

The Genossenschaft der Lübecker Bergenfahrer was founded between 1383 and 1393 to function as the organic connection between the Bergen Counter and the city and council of Lübeck. (4) The arms of the Genossenschaft portrayed on one half of the shield a black double eagle on a golden field and on the other half a headless silver cod on a red field, surmounted by a crown. (5) The Society was headed at first by

(1) H.R., I, no. 177. The merchants of the port cities called the members of the Hansa "brethren."

(2) Bruns, Die Hansa, p. XX.

(3) Arup, Studier i engelsk og tysk handels historie, p. 46; Rohlk, Hansisch-Norwegisch Handelspolitik, p. 8.

(4) Brattegaard, "Über die Organisation, und die Urkunden des hansischen Kontors zu Bergen, bis 1580,"  
B.H.F.S. XXXVIII (1932) 270.

(5) The Bergen Counter's arms were just the reverse.

six senior members or aldermen (1), later reduced to three, and was composed of merchant capitalists, most of whom from time to time sailed to Bergen with their cargo in order to go over their agents' accounts there. The trip in the fifteenth century took on an average some three to four weeks. Some merchants acted as their own skippers. A secretary and manager (2) were in charge of correspondence. The superintendents of freight (3) were important members of the Genossenschaft, for they allocated the freight to be carried by each departing vessel. At times the Bergenfahrer Society had over a hundred members, with their own club-house (4) with a well-stocked cellar drawn upon liberally for celebrations and reunions. (5) Merchants who had been in the employ of the Bergenfahrer in Bergen were often its guests. The records were kept in the Stadtarkiv near the Maria Kirche, die königin aller kirchen an deutschen Kusten. There, in addition to their splendidly carved pews, the members of the Bergenfahrer society established their own chapel and altar and hung a painting of Saint Olav, the patron saint of Norway. The partnership contracts and the bookkeeping and agreements with commission agencies were all concluded and kept in the home office, with

(1) Alterleute.

(2) Vorsteher.

(3) Frachtherren.

(4) Schuttenhaus.

(5) In addition to the Bergenfahrer there were also in Lubeck Ostfahrer, Flandernfahrer, and Schonenfahrer, all known as bürgerliche collegiae. Two hundred and thirty-one wills of the Bergenfahrer are still extant in the Bergen archives.

which the Secretary of the Counter kept in closest touch by constant, all-embracing correspondence. In fact the organization of the Counter, its policies, purchases and sales, and regulations were all dictated by the home office which from its side was willing and ready not only to guide but to protect, provide all requisite capital, and, if need be, go to battle for the Counter's rights and privileges.

At the Bergen end the records and all valuable papers of the Counter were kept in the Bergen Maria Kirche, entirely run and governed by the Counter though originally built and worshipped in by the Norwegians. In Bergen the merchants were called Mascupbroeders, indicating that they were neighbors and brethren in the Gaards. (1) Communications addressed to the Bergen merchants were generally written in low German and addressed to "the Honorable and careful men, the aldermen and the merchants of the German hansa in Bergen" (Den erbaren unde vorsichtigen mannen Olderluden, unde demen menen Kepmanne der Dudeschen henze to Bergen).

The privileges that had been granted the Lübeck merchants in Bergen in 1278, 1285, and 1294 had been confirmed in 1343. (2) Around 1300 the German merchants of Bergen had come to mutual agreement in order to form a common front against

- (1) Wiberg, Bidrag til Bergens Kulturhistoria, p. 109.  
 (2) N.G.L., III, no. 49a.; H.U., II, nos. 311, 312.

the Norwegian authorities. (1) One of their main tasks had been the regulation of trade with the northern fisher-folk and hunters. In their trading with the Germans these Northerners, the so-called Nordfahrer, had incurred a considerable debt, which they had been able to pay only partially with their fish and other wares. While each merchant had his Nordfahrer connection, a central controlling organization was required to prevent merchants from attempting to take a Nordfahrer away from the merchant with whom he had been trading. The enforcement of these regulations devolved upon the Hansa, which, to retain the monopoly necessary to assure collection of the debts, also regulated the grain imports to Bergen. The monopoly, in turn, operated to keep the fishermen in debt, thus strengthening the hold of the Counter.

The large scale economic developments which had taken place in Norway in the thirteenth century, which brought Bergen to the fore as one of the most active trading centers of Europe, could not be considered as true economic progress for Norway. The contrary was the case. And this was due to the fact that the Norwegians themselves did not reap the benefits. Foreign merchants received the lion's share. The Germans had no competitors in their dealings with the Nordland fishermen. Ever since the middle of the fourteenth century Bergen citizens had ceased having independent connections with the north-Norwegian

(1) Brattegaard, "Über die Organisation und die Urkunden des hansischen Kontors zu Bergen bis 1580," B.H.F.S., XXXVIII (1932), 244.

fishing stations. It is quite true that the sailings north of Bergen were, ever since the thirteenth century, forbidden all foreigners, but the Germans were not interested in them. The transport north of Bergen was taken over by Nordland carriers, the Nordfahrrers, who depended entirely upon the Hanseatic merchants. The outfits used in fishing were supplied on credit by the Germans who furnished the fishermen in advance with all they might daily need of food and clothing and minor articles of luxury. The fishermen became completely economically dependent upon the Germans, who themselves arbitrarily determined the prices of both grain and dried fish. Outside of the fact that the Hanseatic merchants could despotically and uncontrolled dictate to the Nordland people their conditions, the foreign merchants obtained no addition of the middle-man's profits. Both in purchases and sales the Baltic grain importers had the last word.

Ever since the middle of the fourteenth century there had been no native middle class in Bergen which could threaten the German monopoly. (1) The Norwegian citizens took no part in the transport abroad of goods. Not only did the Bergen citizens have to abandon their old shipping interests, whether coastal, northward, or to foreign ports; they were forced to refrain from every activity which might collide with German economic interests, both inside the city and in the surrounding countryside. There was no room for independent Norwegian trade in competition with foreign. The Norwegians were to fit into the commercial system dominated by the Hanseatic merchants of the Baltic.

(1) J.S., p. 29.

The Counter, previously described, was the outer symbol of the German dominion in Bergen. Its foundation, dating from the middle of the fourteenth century, was brought about by the necessity of regulating the relations between purchaser and seller. As long as the individual German merchants had their fixed connections in Nordland (1), to which they had given large credits, it was a question of hindering all competition of others. No one must trade with another's debtors. A mutual organ of control was essential in order that the Hanseatic merchants in Bergen should not damage each others business and for this the Counter was founded.

The leadership of Lübeck was most evident in Bergen. Lübeck merchants and Lübeck power dominated in the Bergen Brücke as nowhere else in the whole sphere of Lübeck activities. The Counter was a branch office of Lübeck (2), a trading station under Lübeck administration and law which demanded an entirely independent position in regard to the Norwegian authorities. The members of the Counter were not responsible to Norwegian courts and enjoyed to a great extent what in later times has been called extra-territorial rights. The German corporation in Bergen was, by its very existence, an expression for Norway's subordinate position in economic life. Norway was merely to serve as a field of activity for Hanseatic merchants. The country was a link in the North European trade arrangement which they had organized.

(1) J.S., p. 20.

(2) Ibid., p. 13.

Various factors contributed to the establishment of the Hansa trade monopoly in Norway including that of Lübeck in Bergen. Among these was the blockade of Norway imposed during the three wars between the Kingdom and the Hansa cities, which hindered grain from reaching a hungry population. Time and again the Norwegian government had to give in to the threat or reality of blockade. (1) Throughout the long period of Hansa dominion the Norwegian-Danish government was often in need of military or financial assistance. In return for assistance it granted the favors and privileges that led in considerable degree to the commercial supremacy of the German traders. After the election of a new king, the cessation of war or other upheaval, representative of the Hansa were on hand, wherever the Danish court might be located, to plead the revival of their privileges or the granting of new and extended ones. The Danish-Norwegian King's power was greatly restricted by the power of the nobility as well as by his chronic pennilessness, and the Germans stood ready to fill the power vacuums in the economic sphere. This was especially true in Norway, the stepchild of the kingdom.

Most foreign merchandise entered the country through Bergen, where toll was levied on it and the best of it pur-

(1) Allen, De tre Nordiske Rigers Historie, pp. 35-36; Cambridge Medieval History, VII, 219.



chased at prices established by the Germans. Pfundzoll (1) rechnungen of the 1360's indicate the proportionate share of the cities trading in the Baltic in the total sea-borne trade.

In the middle of the fifteenth century a law was passed whereby non-Hanseatic merchants could not send more than two ships a year to Bergen and then the cargo must be sold wholesale, with the Counter given the first chance to purchase it. (2) Foreign protests were in vain; Bergen was virtually a German city whose destiny lay in the hands of an aristocracy of rich, widely travelled, and intelligent businessmen. Behind them stood a great commercial and maritime power.

Among the Counter's principal duties were those of financing and control, particularly the proper handling of the large outstanding credits to the northern fishermen as well as to others in the first dreadful years after the Black Death which wiped out about one-third of the Norwegian population. (3) The Counter's expenses were met by taxes on imports and exports and the frequent fines collected. The principal aim of the merchants, after monopoly had been achieved, was to maintain the status quo, the olden gewonheiten (4), to furnish Europe with Norwegian fish, and keep the fishermen constantly in their debt.

(1) The Pfundzoll was a tax on the value of the merchandise and the vessels which the Hansa decided to levy in all its maritime cities belonging to the Cologne federation in order to assist in financing the war against King Waldemar IV of Denmark. Vogel, "La Hansa," Revue historique, CLXXIX (1937), 26.

(2) J.S.

(3) Hasund, Det norske folks historie, III, 137.

(4) Rohlk, "Hansisch-Norwegische Handelspolitik in 16 Jahrhunderten," Abhandlungen zur Handels-und Seegeschichte, III (1935), 12.

Various kinds of trading companies were formed to carry on the business of the Hansa, some being organized to remain in force for a certain period, others merely for a vessel's single round trip. One of the most usual forms was the so-called wiederlegung, the societas vera, in which two partners each contributed a certain proportion of the required capital and received, when the business was concluded, a corresponding amount of the profit or loss. Such partnerships differed according to the stipulations in the contract; one partner might busy himself in the trading and the other merely contribute capital or goods. Again, several out of a number of partners might devote their time as well as their money to the undertaking. Speculative business ventures were strictly forbidden, also dealings in options (Termingeschäfte). (1) To form a Hansa partnership the principal requirement was that of being a German of good repute.

When a partnership for trading in Bergen was formed its articles were written down in the Lübecker Niederstadtbuch as well as in the record book of the Bergen Counter, kept by its secretary. The partners wrote each other letters of confirmation covering their mutual obligations, and the partnership papers were signed before witnesses who received a memorandum covering the matter. The partnership was almost always made for an indefinite period. Amounts due each partner upon its dissolution were entered in the Niederstadtbuch. (2)

(1) Bruns, Die Lübecker Bergenfahrer und ihre Chronostik, H.G.Q. II neue folge, V, p. XXXII; Pagel, Die Hanse, p. 279.

(2) Bruns, Die Hanse, p. CIX.

Following is the wording of a typical offenen  
Handelsgesellschaft founded in Lübeck in 1485 for the purpose  
of trading in Bergen, and taken from the Niederstadtbuch (no. 46):

"Hans Konyngk and Clawes Tommassen herewith make it  
public before themselves and their heirs that they have organ-  
ized a company towards which they have each contributed 330  
Lübeck marks, and Clawes Tomassen has in addition (contributed  
2,834 marks which he and his heirs ... agree cannot again be  
lent by the contracting parties. All this is stated without  
malice. Witnesses are the esteemed Olrick Eylers and Herman  
van Mynden, citizens of Lübeck and Hinrich Konyng." (1)

The Lübeck partner of the Selchop (trading company)  
did the buying of the goods to be exchanged in Bergen — flour,  
malt, beer, (2) salt, linens, cloth, and trinkets — for various  
kinds of dried fish, cod-liver oil, hides and furs, butter and  
meat, which the Lübeck partner, upon their receipt, sold on  
the Continent. (3) The Bergen partner was responsible for  
the credit extended, while the Lübeck partner generally fur-  
nished the larger portion of the capital in return for which

(1) Hans Konyngk unde Clawes Tomassen vor sich unde ere  
eerven vor dessen boke hebben bekandt, dat se eyne masschup  
tosamende hebben gemaket, deshalven eyne jewelick in sodane  
masschup dreihundert unde dertosch mark Lub. ingelicht hebben,  
unde Clawes Tomassen hebbe bouen de masschup in de gudere unde  
masschup achteundetwintichhundert unde verundertich mark Lub.  
de he edder syne erven toforen an uth der masschup wedder  
boren solen mogen, allet sunder argelist Tuge sind de beschede-  
nen Olrick Eylers unde Herman van Mynden, borgere to Lübeck  
unde Hirich Konyng. "Die Lübecker Bergenfahrer und ihre  
Chronostik," H.G.Q. II, neue folge, p. CLXXXIII.

(2) Grains, flour, beer, and malt are constantly referred to  
as "heavy goods."

(3) Rohlk, "Hansisch-Norwegisch Handelspolitik im 16 Jahr-  
hundert," Abhandlungen zur Handels-und Seegeschichte, III, 9.

the Bergen partner gave a greater portion of his labor so as to equalize the contributions. Both were thoroughly trained businessmen generally educated in foreign business houses.

In addition to the most important German imports — grain, malt, beer, hemp, tar, and household utilities — small quantities of Italian and Levantine luxury goods were bought, also small amounts of Rhenish wine and Luneburg salt, and in later days, French sea salt (1), though both of these in minor quantities as the dried fish needed no salting for preservation as did the herring of the Baltic. Further, all kinds of German textiles and some smaller Nurnberg articles were imported. It is impossible to determine their importance quantitatively as to volume, value, or margin of profit, for statistics are lacking.

The principal article of export was fish, mainly Lofoten cod caught by the local fishing folk along the coast of the Lofoten region and dried in the air. Herring played an important role, though, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the herring fisheries of Northern Norway were not as important as those of Scania. (2) The only material for comparison that we have is for the years 1398-1400 when the Scania fisheries were at their height. The fisheries then

(1) The export of salt from the bay of Noir-Moutier commenced about 1370. Vogel, La Hanse, p. 14.

(2) Steen, Det norske folks liv og historie, IV, p. 56.

needed a yearly capital of 150,000 English marks, while the Bergen trade required 25,000, or about one-sixth. The east-west trade between the Baltic and western Europe and return also required about 150,000 English marks. These figures refer only to Lübeck and not the Hansa cities in general. (1) Walruses also were caught and their much-prized tusks exported from Bergen. (2) The fisheries of both Scania and northern Norway were very loosely organized.

In comparison with fish, butter, hides, and furs were exported in minor quantities. The country exported neither yarn nor cloth and, as yet, little lumber, though some lumber went to England as shown by thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth century English custom rolls.

During the earlier centuries of Hanseatic trading in Norway payments were principally made in kind. Such records as we possess establish the fact that in early times both cattle and natural products, such as butter, grain, hides, malt, and iron goods, as well as precious metals, were legal methods of payment. (3) The Norwegians were naturally conversant with the exchange function of precious metals, but circulation was very limited in medieval Norway. Although accounts and letters mention payments to be made in English sterling and Lübeck silver coin, our principal knowledge comes from finds of coins.

(1) Arup, Danmarks historie, II, 165.

(2) Steenstrup, Normannerne, I.

(3) Holst, Norges mynter til slutten av 16 Århundre, Nordisk Kultur, XXIX (1936) 93.

Both Norges Gamle Love and documents included in the Diplomatarium Norvegicum mention periods when the payee preferred payment in kind or even in silver spoons to the debased Norwegian currency. (1)

As early as 1049 King Harald Sigurdson began minting silver coins — a hundred years earlier than Sweden — and employed two masters of his royal mint. When he later mixed silver with the gold he had his mints not merely located in the principal trading cities but also in other settlements. Of the eight thousand odd coins from the eleventh century which have been discovered in Norway about a quarter were English and a quarter German. While few twelfth century coins have been found some five thousand were discovered from the thirteenth century, and most of them were Norwegian. (2) Up to the middle of the twelfth century fines were paid to the bishops in coins merely containing 50% of silver. (3) The prelates complaining of this were permitted to demand silver bars or other genuine silver in their place. (4) When the King still further debased his silver coinage with copper and also issued "sliced" coins, the Pope, to whom some of it ultimately arrived, complained in 1270 that "the Norwegian coins

- (1) Holst, "Norges mynter til slutten av 16 Arhundre," Nordisk Kultur, XXIX (1936) p. 95.
- (2) Bugge, Norges historie, II, 95.
- (3) Bull, Det norske folks liv og historie, IV, 93.
- (4) The oldest gold coin found in the North is from Haakon Magnusson's time (1299-1319) and is a unique medieval Scandinavian gold coin. Holst, Norges mynter til slutten av 16 Arhundre, "Nordisk Kultur", XXIX (1936), 93.

are so poor that they are worthless outside their country." (1)  
About 1220 the King gave the Archbishop of Nidaros the right to coin money and retain their own mint-masters. This right was withdrawn in 1281.

King Magnus Lagabøter during his lifetime kept the royal coins of one-third purse silver and when King Eirik Magnusson in 1285 paid his war indemnity to the Germans this was done in one-third silver marks. (2)

During the fourteenth century the value of the coins sank constantly; their contents containing merely one-fifth silver. King Magnus consequently wrote to the Archbishop in 1340 begging him to attempt to straighten out the matter.

King Haakon V succeeded in once more issuing coins of one-third silver content. King Haakon VI attempted to uphold the value and in his mercantile laws of 1377 stated that his coinage must be received and exchanged at its full face value by the merchants of Lübeck and Stralsund. (3) The following year the King was in such desperate financial straits that he attempted to keep up the value of his money by issuing an edict stating that changing his money at any rate below par was punishable by death. As a result of his financial difficulties foreign coins were increasingly used in Norway and particularly English, an English penny being

(1) Holst, "Norges mynter til slutten av 16 Århundre," Nordisk Kultur, XXIX (1936) 93.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Bugge, Norges historie, III, 69.

given for a shilling. (1) At the end of the fourteenth century Denmark abandoned its earlier coinage system in favor of that of Lübeck (2), which was based upon Cologne's (one mark equals 230 grams) and this remained the basis in both Norway and Denmark to as late as 1870. And finally during the fifteenth century two sets of coins were in circulation in Norway, the one containing one-third of silver and the other, the "burned" or refined coin, of as pure silver as was then produced. Even then, however, goods were mainly exchanged for goods. (3)

The exchange was principally in fish for grain, according to prices (and vrakningsregler (4) for the fish) which the merchants of the Counter established.

The tremendous stimulus given to Norwegian fishing by the arrival in Bergen of expert German salesmen resulted in a large increase in settlement up and down the stretch of the coast where the catch was most plentiful. This area extended about two-thirds of the way from Bergen to the North cape. Here lie strewn along a shore frontage of some 150 miles the Lofoten and Vesteraalen Islands, their jagged granite peaks jutting straight up from the Atlantic and their flanks separated by tortuous channels and strong tidal currents. Along their eastern coasts the cod came to spawn, while the herring kept westward to the ocean, and both of them in incredible quantities. The catch was split and cleaned and

- (1) Bull, Det norske folks liv og historie, II, p. 200.
- (2) Ibid., p. 126.
- (3) Ibid., p. 130.
- (4) Regulations as to the sorting of the fish.



then laid out to dry on the cliffs. All of it was shipped to Bergen for export abroad. The dried fish was so hard it lasted for years. The entire population of Nordland, men, women, and the older children, some 5,000 in all (1), were occupied in the work, the exchange for which would give them the bare necessities of life. The Hanseatics never made any serious attempt to participate in sailing to Nordland but left this to the Nordfahrer, the people from northern Norway.

The sailing of the heavily laden cargoes to Bergen, particularly from the Vestfjord banks, whether by the fishermen themselves or Norwegian merchants in their own vessels, was to become one of the acrimonious and disputed questions between the Hansa and the Norwegians and to end in agreements that enabled the foreigners to reap the greatest profits as both buyers and sellers. The fishermen being entirely dependent for sustenance upon the merchants of the Counter, they could not cease trading with the Germans owing to their accruing debt, which during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries became a very real problem to the government. (2) How rapidly the trading increased is indicated by the records which state that Lubeck imported from Bergen in 1370 to the value of 10,586 Lubeck marks, in 1373 of 18,055, and in 1381 of 19,072. (3)

(1) From letter to author from Norwegian Government Statistical Office.

(2) J.S., p. 16.

(3) J.S., p. 19.

The fishermen arrived in Bergen late in May with the previous fall's catch and that of the early spring, as also with the cod-liver oil. Their second arrival, in July, was, however, more important as the best fishing took place between March and May.

The Bergen trade was carried in ships built in German ports. In the twelfth century Norway had merely open vessels propelled by oars as well as sail. These ships sailed well but they could carry very little cargo and they could not easily be transformed into fighting ships. They were so inferior to the high-decked ships built by the German cities that by the middle of the fourteenth century they had been largely discarded. (1)

The principal type of German merchant vessel was the Kogge, based upon an earlier Frisland type. The Kogge was an ungainly vessel with rounded bow and stern, which gave it the appearance of half a walnut shell, and, in its earliest form, one mast amidships carrying a square sail. In the fourteenth century smaller masts were added on the fore and aft Kastel. It was propelled wholly by sail. (2) Up to the thirteenth century the Kogge was steered by a rudder on the steuerbord side, thus giving rise to the term "starboard," Then the rudder was placed at the stern. Despite its clumsiness the Kogge had its good points. It had large space for its cargo,

(1) Pagel, Die Hanse, p. 256; N.U., p. 28.

(2) Ibid., p. 25.

was easy to maneuver, behaved well in a storm, and was difficult to board. Beginning with the fourteenth century, fifty last was a normal sized vessel, and in 1358, sixty last. In 1440, one hundred last was the average, while a quarter of a century later they ran up to two hundred. (1) A Kogge of one hundred last carried twenty men.

Various German ports received all that was needed for shipbuilding. Wood, tar, pitch, and iron came from Sweden (2); ropes from the Hamburg rope walk; hemp and flax for sails and ropes from Livonia; wood from Danzig and Riga as well as from Sweden. Anchor smiths came from Danzig and Stralsund and there were sailmakers aplenty in the shipbuilding ports.

Most of the Hanseatic ships were owned by syndicates of which the captain was usually, though not always, a member. He was responsible to the owners as a body. In the period 1369-1399 the ships sailing between Lübeck and Bergen were on an average worth about 240  $\text{£}$ . (3)

Merchantmen and men-of-war were built very much alike; the latter, however, were equipped with guns after 1381. The Hansakoggen were manned neither by trained officers nor soldiery; the commander-in-chief in their disastrous, as well as in their successful naval engagements against Denmark was one of Lübeck's burgomasters and the crew were his soldiers. It was a time when pretty much everyone knew how to fight,

(1) Pagel, Die Hanse, p. 256. A "lest" or "last" equalled about one and one-half tons.

(2) Pagel, Die Hanse, p. 256; H.R., I, no. 384; H.U., IV, no. 178.

(3) Mark.

such being necessary to preserve one's life whether on sea or on land. The cities were, however, loathe to do so and began hostilities only as a last resource when money, negotiations, and trickery had failed. For successful trading, peace was necessary. The Hansa therefore never wished war except when it was inevitable in the furthering of its commercial empire. "To negotiate is far better than to fight," said a Lübeck burgomaster, Heinrich Castrap (1), a century after the peace of Stralsund. After a later peace in which the Hansa cities figured, one of the English delegates (Dr. Russell) remarked that "he would rather treat with all the world's princes than the Hanseatic Councillors." (2) They were hard bargainers.

Such vessels as were destined for the same port were generally ordered to collect in some mutually convenient German rendezvous and, as a protection against wind and weather, against pirates and plundering inhabitants of coastal regions, they sailed as a convoy, often led by a vredecogghe (3) (man-of-war) but without compass and with little knowledge of the stars. The compass was known and used in the Mediterranean in the thirteenth century; though also known in the North it was not generally used in the North until a century later. Nor were charts used; the merchants sailed cautiously by soundings, having die kunst alle in Kopf (the art, navigation,

(1) After signing the Peace of Utrecht in 1474.

(2) Vogel, "La Hanse," Revue Historique, CLXXIX (1937), 9.

(3) Bjork, "Piracy in the Baltic," Speculum, XVIII (1943), 45-46.

in their head). We have no certain knowledge of what protection they had against accidents of navigation. Insurance was not taken out in the Lübeck-Bergen trade, and against piracy the German vessels had only their own good fighting spirit, all hands being armed in case of attack. (1)

The route usually taken by the Hansa vessels sailing from Lübeck to Bergen was through the Great Belt (2) up to the southern shores of Norway. From there they followed the coast north until they reached Bergen waters. (3)

German merchants in Bergen controlled domestic as well as foreign commerce. Not only did they buy goods for export from fishermen and native merchants; they also travelled around the countryside and bought directly from the peasants to whom they sold whatever was required. They kept large warehouses and retailed from them in larger or smaller quantities directly to the natives. (4) The peasants found that the Germans, though hard to deal with, gave them cheaper goods in return and were also more liberal in extending credit than their own traders. (5) They thus preferred to give them cattle, pitch, tar, skins, timber, butter and eggs, and dried meat in exchange for cloth, iron goods, kitchen utensils and trinkets.

(1) A fourteenth century Florentine, Villani, speaks of marine insurance in Lombardy in 1182.

(2) The central passage between the Danish islands of Zealand and Fyen, leading from the Baltic into the Kattegat.

(3) Rohlk, "Hansisch-Norwegesche Handelspolitik in 16 Jahrhunderte," Abhandlungen zur Handels und Seegeschichte, III, 12.

(4) Allen, De tre Nordiske Rigers Historie, p. 37.

(5) H.U., p. 46.

German artisans were as superior to Norwegian artisans as German merchants to Norwegian merchants. One of the principal reasons for the superiority of the German artisans was the admirable training and strict supervision and instruction required by their guilds (Zünfte) as compared with the impotent Norwegian Laug. The German was an excellent craftsman who, as master or apprentice, jealously guarded what he had learned; the Norwegian acquired nothing from him, if by rare chance they happened to be on friendly terms. The Germans in Lübeck and elsewhere were directed by strong and wise policies and self-assured, energetic and enterprising citizens, capable men, willing to sacrifice for the common weal and inordinately proud of belonging to a free city. (1) Such feelings, largely due to their independence, were unthinkable to the Norwegian of the day.

The Hansa trade stimulated Norwegian economic development. Owing to it the great fishing industry of the Nordland district arose and developed and became of European importance. But, as we have seen, it was the foreigners who reaped most of the profits, for, thanks to their grain, they had Norway in their hands. It is impossible from the available material to determine whether the Hansa kept prices in Norway about what they would have been if there had been more competition. All we know is that the Hansa, or its Counter, determined prices, and certainly to the disadvantage of the sellers. After the foundation of its Counter, Bergen rapidly became

(1) Bendixen, "Tyskernes handel paa Norge og det hanseatiske kontor i Bergen," B.H.F.S., I (1915), 56.

the principal home of German trading in Norway, greatly exceeding Oslo, Tønsberg, and Nidaros. The Bergen Counter was the only staple in Scandinavia. With its rapid development the Counter gave continuously growing expression to Norwegian economic life; by its actions it monopolized Norwegian trade with the rest of Europe. It was the last Counter to be founded by the Hansa and the last to be vacated.

As indicated above the basis charter of the Bergen Counter was the "letter of freedom" of 1294 reaffirmed by King Magnus Erikson in 1343. In brief (1) this letter granted the Germans the privilege of laying up to the wharves without first asking permission and trading freely throughout the realm (except north of Bergen) after the king's representative had purchased what he thought was required for the use of the king. Duty of one ship's pound of the best quality was exacted from each vessel bringing rye or wheat to any city, but flour was excepted. The letter also permitted the Germans to store their goods wherever convenient, although they might sell them only in designated places. Freedom from guard and night-watch duty, and some legal privileges, were also granted.

The German merchants refused citizenship, not wishing to assume the burghers' duties or to be burdened with their taxes and military services. Their extra-territorial status with all its privileges and no duties seemed to them much preferable. In Sweden on the other hand, many of the Hansa

(1) See page 52 and 53.

merchants became Swedish citizens and among her ablest tradesmen. (1) They retained, however, their own language and mercantile courts; they also became judges in the Swedish courts.

On October 21, 1369, the cities of Lübeck, Rostock, Wismar, Stralsund, and Greifswald, the Prussian and Livonian Hansa cities, and those of Zutphen and Deventer met and laid down the following rules for the conduct of the Hanseatic Counter in Bergen: (2)

(1) The custom duty of a groat per pound for imported merchandise should be paid without remonstrance, and whoever refused to do so should have himself or his goods detained by his associates. If anyone escaped without making such proper payment, the authorities of his city must at once be informed.

(Considerable violence in Bergen, perpetrated by skippers and sailors had, during the early period, been brought to the notice of the home offices, which had given the offenders no protection from punishment by the local authorities.)

(2) The drawing of a knife in any squabble meant a fine of twenty English shillings, and wounding another, the loss of all merchants' rights until the dispute and injury had been adjusted by, and to the satisfaction of, the home city.

(3) Anyone profiting by seizure of property washed ashore from a shipwreck would be liable to loss of both his honor and his property. If he had purchased the goods in

(1) Rorig, "Die Hanse," Deutsche Rundschau, CLXXXVIII (1921), 270.

(2) H.R., I, nos. 471, 511.



question without knowing their origin he might clear himself by swearing to his innocence and returning the goods, receiving, however, no restitution for his expenditure for them.

Most of the employees being of a young and inflammable age, naturally they were attracted by the virtuous young Norwegian girls as well as by the numerous prostitutes. To hinder if possible, such attachments from going too far an ordinance was published reading: "If any of you in this country engages himself to a woman or maid, he must arise and vanish from this honorable community of merchants. If any such remain he shall be considered perfidiously foresworn."

The Counter was ruled by its two aldermen and a council of eighteen, with a secretary who was generally a lawyer and the only academically trained person in the Counter. The aldermen were answerable to the Lübeck headquarters. (1)

Prior to the appointment of regular secretaries (2), some churchman or other of St. Mary's or St. Martin's acted in this capacity and went by the name of the "merchants' cleric." That the secretaries were pretty generally Lübeckers angered the merchants of Hamburg who complained "that the good Bergen Counter is manned and ruled solely by Lübeck merchants, and merchants from other places are given no consideration."

Upon assuming office the secretary took the following oath:

I promise and swear that I will be faithful and obedient to your Worships as directors of the free and imperial

(1) H.R., I, 212; Nielsen, Bergen, pp. 237, 241; Brattegaard, "Das kontor zu Bergen," B.H.F.S., XXXVIII (1932).

(2) Bruns, Die Secretäre des deutschen kontors zu Bergen states 1,448; Nielsen, in Bergen, p. 238 states 1,469.

city of Lübeck, the honorable cities of the German Hansa and its Counter in Bergen, Norway, that I will to my best ability diligently further its privileges, decisions and statutes, laws, and decisions, that I will endeavor faithfully to guard it against harm and injury; whenever I hear of anything to its disadvantage I will report it. I will keep secret from outsiders matters relating to the Counter and otherwise will do all in my power to faithfully, diligently, and honestly carry out the duties of a Secretary of the Counter in question. So help me God.

Meetings of the merchants were opened by the Senior Aldermen who arose and welcomed the assembly, after which the secretary read the statutes and the meeting proceeded to business.

## CHAPTER V.

### The Counter as a Social Unit

As previously mentioned the Hanseatic League had established five major foreign trading posts, those of Bergen, Wisby, Novgorod, Bruges, and London, the latter known by the name of the Steelyard. There were similarities as well as differences between them.

The German merchants that gradually filtered into England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries encountered a strong, self-conscious, rapidly developing burgher class, well established authority, and a civilization fully as advanced as their own.

King Edward III in 1363 by renewing Edward I's (1) celebrated Charta Mercatoria of 1303, regranted free trading in England to all foreigners, thus giving a great spur to the London headquarters of the Germans in the Steelyard.

As indicated more fully in a previous chapter, at various times when the king was in need of funds, the Steelyard came to his assistance. In the fourteenth century English wars with France, the Steelyard aided the English kings with ships, supplies, and weapons. (2)

The German merchants in Wisby decided in the twelfth century to facilitate their Russian trade by establishing a

(1) See page 22.

(2) Goldschmidt, Die deutsche Hanse, p. 57.

separate center in Novgorod. As a result of their negotiations with the ruling Grand Duke of Moscovy, and the city authorities, they were permitted to do so and obtain privileges safe-guarding their future rights and trading privileges. The so-called St. Peter's Hof was founded and surrounded by a stockade for its protection.

The German merchants from Wisby, largely of Lübeck<sup>11</sup> origin, were soon joined in the Novgorod foundation by merchants from several Baltic towns as well as from Livonia. It had a shifting character for its merchants came from various cities and never remained beyond a specified period, generally half a year.

The Novgorod Counter formed an independent state ruled by its own law court and remained more or less independent until 1361 when it was obliged to refer its important decisions to the home cities. (1)

In the fifteenth century the St. Peter's hof, or Skra as it was also called, underwent a change in its internal management. Shortly afterwards, however, when Ivan the Great conquered Novgorod in 1478 the Skra and its merchants were plundered and temporarily ruined.

It had lasted through four periods. During the first, from the twelfth century to the end of the thirteenth, the Wisby merchants had directed it; during the second, from the end of

(1) Schlüter<sup>11</sup>, Skra, p. 2. Skra or Skra, meant not only the law, and was here used to indicate the law of the St. Peter's Hof, but likewise meant guild<sup>12</sup> or craft.

the thirteenth century to the second half of the fourteenth, Wisby and Lübeck had divided the management; during the third, from the second half of the fourteenth to the middle of the fifteenth, the control had been in the joint hands of German and Livland cities; while in the last period, down to 1494, or some sixteen years after Ivan's plundering, Livland cities, Riga, Dorpat, Pernau and Reval, took over the leadership.

In Bruges various European nations, in addition to the Hansa, obtained valued privileged factories, and trading procedure became highly developed. By 1200 Bruges had become the greatest international emporium in northern Europe. At the end of the fifteenth century, political strife, the silting up of the harbor and outworn economic procedures lost Bruges its trade to Antwerp where the Hansa then moved.

The principal aim of the merchants of the three Counters of Novgorod, London and Bruges was to retain the entire east-west trade. Because of their surplus capital and highly developed trading capacity, they obtained control of the Russian and English trade (1) and could place on the Flanders market the much desired products of their countries and obtain a most profitable exchange of southern and western products, including Flemish cloths for Scandinavia. In the entire Hansa commercial scheme Scandinavia thus became an important factor.

While the Hansa offices in Novgorod, Bruges, and other places had definite written regulations governing business

(1) It was principally in the export of finished English cloth that the Hansa was active.

procedure and the relationship of their merchants to those of other nations, the fishing colony in Scania, and the office in Bergen, had no such book of rules and regulations. The protection of the trader and the maintenance of order in his work-a-day were laid down in the various letters of liberty (Freiheitsbriefen) given the Hansa by the rulers of Denmark, Norway, and England. The greater the activity of the Hansa the more necessary it became to codify the rules governing maritime commerce. This was repeatedly discussed at meetings of the Hansa, where the members attempted to come to an understanding about the individual rights of the owner and skipper, the customs-house officials and sailor.

The Bergen and Novgorod counters differed considerably from those of Bruges, Wisby (1), and London in that they were obliged to organize and carry on amid what the German merchants of even that day considered "wild conditions," while the Flemish Counter was backed by the wealthiest and most powerful merchant guild in Europe and back of London stood a powerful monarchy.

The Wisby Counter was founded around 1187, the London and Bruges Counters in 1250, the Novgorod in 1273, and the Bergen around 1343. (2) They were all of essential importance,

(1) The Wisby Counter being isolated and largely supplanted in its trade by Novgorod and destroyed by King Waldemar of Denmark's raid in 1361, no further mention is made of it.

(2) The dates given are quoted by various authors, but cannot be entirely relied upon.

for to trade in such uncertain times, staples, warehouses, and experienced agents were necessary in important foreign markets. Politically and economically they watched over the interests of their home cities' trade. No other merchant class assumed the position their members attained.

While the different Counters varied considerably, they were all alike, excepting Novgorod, in the fact that they were separated from the home office or offices, living according to their own rules, cut off from the city in which they lived. This was no Hanseatic peculiarity, but quite customary in the Middle Ages. In Bruges, the Spaniards, Portuguese, Genoese, Venetians, French, and English lived similarly isolated. Also, living monastically was quite usual in certain trading centers. Except in Bruges, the Hanseatic merchants lived in their own quarters, in Novgorod in the Courtyard of St. Peter's, in London in the Steelyard, in Wisby in the German merchants' section of the walled city, and in Bergen in the German "Brücke."

By the year 1400 when Bergen numbered some 14,000 inhabitants, 3,000 of them were Germans.

The German merchants were sent out as comparatively young men, and after a number of years had generally laid enough aside to be permitted to put some of it in the business or to return home when their terms of contract had expired. To be admitted, a merchant must have resided in his home city at least

seven years and must have full approval of the heads of the League. After he had been accepted he spent from seven to ten years passing through the various ranks until he might possibly become a councillor or an alderman. There were six rungs up the ladder — Stubenjunge, Bootsjunge, Gesell, Meister or Hausmeister, Achtzehner, and Olderleute (Alterleute). The Stubenjunge, the youngest and last arrivals, did all the "dirty work." The Bootsjunge rowed and were in charge of the boats. The Gesell was a journeyman (1). The Meister was a merchant from whose rank one was chosen to be the head of each house. The Achtzehner were councillors and the Olderleute, aldermen who led the council and acted as intermediaries between the Counter and the authorities in the home city. In addition to these there were three musicians and eight Knechte, one of whom, the Tepper, drew the beer and wine into the cans; others fed the stove or acted as servants. The Schaffer was responsible for keeping order at the drinking feasts and seeing that nothing was served after ten o'clock.

Regulations stated: The Gesellen (or journeymen) might be non-Hanseatic provided they were not English, Zealanders, Hollanders, Brabançons, Flemings, Nürnbergers or High-Germans. They must always be of German origin. (2)

The younger members of the Counter could do no business of their own nor mix with the older merchants until they had passed the various degrees and obtained full status as Hansa

(1) Wiberg, "Schötstuene i Bergen," B.H.M.S., XII (1939) 15.; Nielsen, Bergen, p. 239 ff.

(2) Lübecker Niederstadtbuch, ms. no. 134.



merchants. Their work was hard (1), particularly when fishing smacks were arriving from the North loaded with the season's catch. Then they were awakened at four and kept hard at work until nine at night, with short times out for breakfast at eight, dinner at one, and supper at five. The Gesell who had successfully completed his term as apprentice was subjected to the so-called Hanseatic games, the brutality of which picture the age in which they took place and the coarseness of the spectator's enjoyment. The event was the fete of the year in Bergen, with the Gaards and vessels in port decorated with flags. A Norwegian Hanseatic scholar (2) has given the following account of the games, much of which is contained in the chronicle of the Bergen humanist, Magister Absalon Pedersen Beyer.

The smoke test took place on the morning of the initiation. The senior members of the Counter passed in solemn procession down the Shoemakers' Street, escorted by a number of their youngest members. They carried buckets in which they gathered such scraps of leather, horsehair, and filthy sweepings as lay on their path. The parade was accompanied by masked figures, a buffoon, and two others dressed as a peasant and peasant woman who rushed around playing tricks on the others. (3)

(1) H.B., pp. 92, 100.

(2) Christian Koren Wiberg, for many years the director of the Hanseatic Museum in Bergen and writer of various highly valuable monographs and stories of the Hanseatic merchants in Bergen. The games are described in Nielsen's Bergen, pp. 243-249. Techen, Die deutsche Brücke zu Bergen, pp. 25-29.

(3) The fool and the stupid peasant were always welcome actors.

Upon returning to the schütting or schötstue (1) the ceremony commenced. The candidate was hauled up into the chimney by a rope. As soon as he was made fast a fire was lit and banked with the disgusting contents of the buckets. Nauseated, stifled, and half dead from the appalling stench and smoke, the victim was from time to time lowered to be put through questioning. When almost at the end of his endurance he would be released, carried out into the Counter's central courtyard, and drenched with six casks of water.

The water test was generally celebrated around Pentecost. The candidates were first entertained at a generous banquet after which they were stripped of all their clothing and rowed out into the harbor. There they were three times thrown into the water and thrashed mercilessly each time they came up. They were stripped in order to make certain of the sex of the candidate, a woman having once, in the early days of the Counter, for some time passed herself off as a man.

The day previous to the flogging test a part of the Counter marched in procession to the forest in order to cut long, supple rods, while the other proceeded to the schütting to erect what was called "Paradise." This consisted of a series of compartments each named for one of the merchants' gardens. In front of each compartment was a wide bench, named the altar or place of sacrifice. By the benches were placed the rods that had come

(1) The arms of the Lübeck Schütting (clubhouse) were three herrings on a golden field.

from the forest. The members whose duty it was to carry out the initiation were selected from among the most muscular and vigorous. They were sent to bed early "so as to get up their strength." The next morning started with a procession, led by drummers and commanded by the hausmeisters in masks and long black mantles, with swords at their sides. After cutting leafy branches for the flogging they returned to the schütting for a glass of wine before repairing to their various quarters. The candidates next assembled in the schütting to listen to an address by the senior members, who exhorted them to order, diligence, and faithfulness and warned them against drunkenness and debauchery. They were further informed that there was still time to withdraw from their desire to become members of the Counter, if they did not wish to experience the coming trial.

A great banquet was held at noon, presided over by two Hausmeisters and enlivened by song and merriment and the antics of clowns and jester. The apprentices were plentifully plied with wine. Half intoxicated, they were one after the other undressed and stretched on the benches in front of the strong men and the bundles of rods. The thrashing began, the shrieks of the victims being drowned by the crash of the musicians' cymbals, these ceasing whenever a new victim was stretched out. (1) The last beating over, a harlequin would make a speech about the might and glory of the Counter. Another banquet was held in

(1) Every once in a while death would result from the beatings.

which the candidates were expected to participate. If they fainted from pain or fell off their seats, they were re-beaten or taken out and ducked in the well.

The Preckespiel took place on Easter Sunday when the members of the Counter proceeded to St. Margaret's cemetery to watch the initiates, one by one, climb to the top of the highest trees and shout out the names of all the women of ill-repute in the city (1), describing in the minutest detail their adventures with them.

The separate games held by the artisans were, if possible, even more brutal and primitive. In their so-called Stapelspiel, the victim was thrown into an eight-foot deep hole, filled with lime. If he attempted to come out before he was given permission he was stoned. The origin of all these games was probably the "fun" or festive occasion in the German villages of the day, and the ceremonies where newcomers were initiated into their work.

The question of the discontinuance of the games was discussed at the Hanserecesse of 1540. A Lübeck representative stated that they were an old custom "which for certain reasons could not be abandoned, but which were gone through by one as well as another." A later explanation of 1549 said they were a means of maintaining discipline among those who worked at the Counter. The only show, in fact, which the Counter enjoyed more was a beheading. A sad commentary upon the time.

(1) Sometimes a whole shipload of them arrived from Germany.

The games, and enjoyment of them, persisted as late as the time of King Christian IV who visited Bergen in July 1599.

"As His Majesty was naturally jolly and certainly in his youth evinced an inclination to mischief, this pleased the citizens, and of this they still speak. When he was given an invitation by the bailiff, to come to Claus Miltzow's home, and noticed that the windows in the house were very old, he ordered them all immediately broken, and then offered new panes. On June 24th he was a guest of the Sistergaard, on Tyskebryggen, and watched the games. The King thought them so amusing that he ordered one of his lackeys to take part. The lackey was treated so roughly, that when the King offered him a Rosennoble, if he would once more participate, he begged piteously to be let off and said he would not do so for a hundred Rosennobles, thus making the King and Duke Ulrich laugh heartily." (1)

Fines were frequently paid at the times of games, these naturally varying according to the misdemeanor. (2) If you had been so fortunate as to become a father, as much as a barrel of beer was due; for lesser misdemeanors, a barrel of flour. The youngest paid their fines by the receipt of flogging. As drinking and gorging (gasterien, sauffen und fressen) increased at times, special and unusually severe fines were imposed. The younger members, when united for "serious drinking" were from time to time to report to their betters that they might judge whether the carousers still could stand up and answer questions understandingly. Under no circumstances were they to fall asleep in the garden or shriek in the neighbors' gardens. All must attend church twice every Sunday.

(1) Holberg, Bergens Beskrivelse, p. 18.

(2) Wiberg, "Schötstuene i Bergen," B.H.M.S. XII (1939), 30.; Barthold, Geschichte der deutschen Hansa, II, 108.

Lubeck's statutes of 1372 strictly forbade the presence of women in the Counter's territory, yet we read of a fete which was "jolly and gay with zithers and brandy and dancing twice a year, at Christmas and Easter time, each of the younger members bringing his lady. Beer and sandwiches were provided for the ladies, beer and brandy for the hosts. The young gesellen pleased their partners by providing them with "mouth-good" (mungaet -- light home-brewed beer). (2)

The reason for insisting upon celibacy was the fear that a member might betray the secrets of his compatriots to a Norwegian wife. (3) They were all subject to strict, not to say brutal, regulations. The probationer could never leave

(1) "Lustich und frolich mit zittern und lutten, unde junge frouen, getanzt und gesprungen." Wiberg, Schötsstune i Bergen, p. 31.

The classical low-German written language, which was replacing in the fourteenth century various local dialects, was really promulgated by the chancery of the Lübeck council. It was used at the Hansetage and in the constant exchange of letters between the Hansa towns, and became commonly used by the Hanseatic merchants in the North; it also became the diplomatic language of northern Europe. The King of Denmark had in his chancery a special low-German division. Hune, Hanse, Downing Street und Deutschlands Lebensraum, p. 34.

The low German was used quite early in Scandinavian communications. The kings of Norway often used it in the fourteenth century when dealing with German matters and so did Norwegian bishops. D.H., VII, no. 259 (1369), V, no. 382 (1389). Bergen citizens mixed up the two languages. Nevertheless, up to the union of Norway and Denmark, the usual procedure for both the king and the German city was to employ Latin in their diplomatic notes.

(2) Wiberg, Gessellstanden og Gesseller, p. 100. Also in Schötsstune i Bergen, p. 33.

(3) On the fireplace of the Herrenstude of the Lübeck Ratsweinkeller was inscribed the following:

Mennich man lude singst  
Wen man ein de brut bringet  
Weste he, wat men em brochte  
Dat he wohl wenen mochte.

Hansische Geschichtsblätter, XXV (1920) 36

the city during his term of probation, and must never spend a night outside his gaard, for he might "tell the native woman under her charm as well as that of liquor, things she had best not know."

A mascopibok (1) or neighbor-book was kept by each gaard (2); it contained any joint accounts and special regulations. At the end of the last century a gartenrecht was discovered in an old chest. It had been concluded between the two gaards Jacobsfjorden and Belgarden. In it they agreed upon certain joint rules and regulations to govern the inmates of the two adjacent building-complexes. Among these are found the following: (3)

If anyone, be it the head of the house, guest or apprentice, has with him any loose woman on the even of a church festival or when free beer is being drunk, then the guilty member must furnish neighbors and apprentices a whole keg of beer, and the woman is to be thrown into the Vaag (4), without any mercy of excuse whatsoever.

During the four sacred winter eves (5) when the neighbors have provided beer, whoever had drunk too much so that he disturbs the peace and vomits from his excess or does not properly trim his candle has to pay, without dispensation, a fine of a barrel of beer. Anyone who produces a child pays a barrel of beer. Whichever neighbor starts a row when neighbors have met, must pay, without dispensation, two barrels of beer, be it neighbor, guest or apprentice.

On Shrove-Thursday the neighbors of Jacobsfjorden and Belgarden met and adjusted a dispute between Hans Schulte and Hans Petersen, brought about by their having knived holes

(1) H.B., pp. 86-88.

(2) Ibid., pp. 20-21.

(3) "Das Gartenrecht in den Jacobsfjorden unndt Bellgarden," B.H.F.S., I (1895), pp. 43-67. The Gartenrecht was the code governing the conduct of the members of one gaard or two adjoining gaards.

(4) The bay.

(5) St. Martin's, Christmas, Easter, and either St. Michael's or New Year's eves.

in each others' bodies. For this reason each of them had to pay a barrel of flour to the poor house, "in order to settle a great strife." (1)

The bathing establishment, though outside the confines of Tyskebryggen, was often frequented and very popular owing to the refreshments served, in particular the Lübeck beer. Few bars were as popular as that of the bath, and few had as many drunkards and brawls.

The Church seems to have played some part in the lives of the merchants in Bergen. (2) It certainly did much, down through the ages, to keep alive the German spirit. In Bergen as in the other Counters, the members were expected to attend church on Sundays. For this purpose they were assigned St. Mary's, built in 1188 and generally referred to in Hanseatic papers as Our Lady's Church. (3) It remained in the hands of the Counter from 1408 to 1766, and sermons were preached in German from its pulpit until 1870. While the clergymen possessed the book-learning, they did not always possess the greatest virtue, for many of the old aldermens' records complain of their quarrelsome and inebriate habits. The various members

(1) Bendixen, "Das Gartenrecht in den Jaconsfjorden unndt Bellgarden," B.H.F.S., I (1895), pp. 43-67.

(2) H.B., pp. 74-78 and 105-108.

Fortunately there was a lighter and more elevating side to the entertainments in the plays which were from time to time at the less busy season, acted by the younger members. They commenced these in the middle of the fifteenth century. In the middle of the sixteenth century they gave several plays by the great contemporary Nurnburg poet, singer and playwright, Hans Sachs. Wiberg, Schöttstuene i Bergen, p. 39.

(3) Holberg, Bergens Beskrivelse, pp. 167-168, 171, 179; H.M.S. VI (1941), 146.



of the Counter had their particular pews, the aldermen and seniors occupying finely carved stalls, while the others were seated according to rank, the lowest being placed farthest back from the altar. The pulpit, donated by the Counter, was one of the finest pieces of baroque carving in Northern Europe. There were ecclesiastical guilds in honor of all saints. Of these St. Catherine and St. Dorothy had their separate altars. During their years of prosperity the wealthier members made many a costly gift, and gave portraits of aldermen, and prints and shields bearing the black eagle of Lübeck on its yellow ground, quartered with the crowned, headless cod of Bergen on its red ground. On the walls were hung devices and arms and trademarks of successive generations of merchants, and the Hanseatic motto:

Honest be at every time  
Watchfulness be also thine.

On special church occasions, the seniors appeared in their magnificent fur robes, preceded by the Hausmeisters carrying ceremonial lanterns.

It would have been wholly unnatural for the Germans and Norwegians living side by side in Bergen for hundreds of years to have stood in constant enmity to each other. Decades passed in friendly intercourse. The governors and higher Norwegian functionaries dined and went to the drinking bouts and boisterous celebrations of the aldermen and Actzehner; the German merchants went to the weddings and christening parties of the burghers; while the burghers were always eager to laugh

at the brutalities of the Hansa games, as well as to be invited to the wakes in Schötstuen subsequent to the funeral of a well-to-do-German. In one letter, an alderman writes home to Lübeck in regard to the Norwegian provincial governor that he was "much inclined to feasting, and he himself would hint that we should give him a party at the Counter. If we had not done so we would have made an enemy of him, and that is the way it also goes with the others." (1) In another letter a Norwegian tells of his good luck at having been invited to feast, stuff, and swill with a Hanseatic friend. (2)

It must also be noted that the relationship between the Norwegian government and the Hansa did not always correspond to that between the burghers of Bergen and the Counter, where the merchants of the two nationalities shared the market, the town hall, and the largest wine cellar, the last naturally leading to conviviality as well as quarrels.

This relationship between the citizens of Bergen and the merchants of the Counter is described in an article by Olaf Sollied. He writes:

It is rather usual to consider Bergen of the middle ages as a half-German city, even as a "Hansa City," half outside the real Norway and differing from the surrounding territory. This is quite erroneous. Its citizens were at all times entirely Norwegian. They lived their own life and championed their city's national independence as strongly as the citizens of any other Norwegian city, probably particularly because it had a powerful foreign element in its midst.

This was naturally in many ways of considerable influence and contributed in giving the city and citizens special traits. Throughout the entire middle ages the German merchants

(1) From the collection of Hansa letters in the Bergen Hanseatiske Museum.

(2) Brattegaard, "Skriftprover fra Det Hanseatiske kontoret i Bergen," 1406-1760, H.M.S. XV, (1947) 11-16.

stood completely outside the city's communal life. When they finally controlled both exports and imports the Bergen merchants were obliged to turn to them in their foreign trading and it is self-evident that such a course entailed dangerous political consequences. It is, however, uncertain whether this was economically unfortunate or not for the country population of the western and northern districts .... The Germans were by necessity obliged to cling together as long as it was a question of insisting upon their common privileges in dealing with the Norwegian government authorities. Assuredly the consideration of their own advantage was uppermost when dealing with their Norwegian business connections .... One cannot blame the political misunderstandings between the Norwegian government and the Hanseatic League upon Bergen conditions and believe there was chronic ill-feeling between its German and native inhabitants. It seems rather that the relationship between them was generally a good one which, of course, was mutually advantageous. One must not lay too much stress on the arbitrariness and brutality characteristic of the men of the day, not merely indicative of the Germans, nor on the acute crises which sometimes led to riots and violence. They were at times caused by outside influences connected with political constellations. As for Norwegian leaders of the late middle ages, they very generally supported (1) the Germans.

In justice to the Germans it must be said that they did feel a certain obligation to Bergen. Many of the still extant wills of the German merchants left sums to Norwegian churches and cloisters, as well as to the destitute and sick, "de arme in de hand to givende." (2) They also left beer, shoes, clothing, and money to the poor "so that they might be clothed, be cleaned, and be well filled" and godranke als sik dat behored. Time and again we find them keeping their illegitimate children in mind by generous donations.

But if, by and large, the relationship between German merchants and Norwegian citizens was advantageous to both sides, and at times positively amiable, there was friction too. In

(1) Sollied, "Bergens Raadmand i Middelalderen," B.H.F.S. XXXIII, p. 43.

(2) Several hundred of the Lubeck Bergenfahrer wills were in the Lubeck library prior to the World War of 1939-45.

1352 the Norwegian King complained of the behavior of the German merchants: "When they arrive in Norway and lay to in a harbor, the first thing they do is to whip, strike, and kill people, after which they sail away. They do not care whether they are answerable to God or the King or give any compensation to those whom they have injured." (1) The most difficult period in the relationship between the Bergen factions was naturally the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when the Hansa was pushing Norwegian trade and shipping out of business, both on the high seas and along the southern coast, and also in the countryside around the German trading posts. The result was that scarcely any independent Norwegian shipping was left; the Nordfahrer were in the pockets of the Germans.

Considering the entire long career of the Bergen Counter one can, I believe, reach only one conclusion concerning the character of the German merchants and the adjacent German artisans — they are brutal, thoughtless, and unscrupulous. Their sole objective was to make money, and to achieve this they excluded by every means in their power any and all competitors. They attained their objective, certainly for a century and a half, thanks to their ability, efficiency and acumen, the powerful, one-minded organization at their back, and the money and assets at their command.

Their life was a strange, unnatural one, organized so that their sole thought and education should be their

(1) Dipl. Svecanum, V, (Dec. 6, 1342), nos. 3,175, 3,672.

business. Their only pleasure outside that of defeating competitors was the occasional swilling of beer during their cold, lonely, and cheerless existence in a foreign land and a city with an execrable climate. If the members of the Counter reached the top of its hierarchy and were able to trade for themselves, make and lay aside money, and look forward to a happy family life amid the prosperous, luxurious burghers of their native city, then they had attained the height of their desires. Quite a few of them accomplished this.

It is difficult to analyze or understand the lives and motives of these men who lived in the tight-fitting, dark houses, huddled jowl to jowl along the rain-swept wharves of Bergen, six hundred years ago; yet when one has read what they wrote and much of what was written about them by their contemporaries the conclusion is inescapable that all their efforts and actions were largely selfish.

## CHAPTER VI.

### The External Relations of the Bergen Counter

The relations of the merchants of the Bergen Counter with the Crown of Norway and with their rivals in trade were determined by their goal — monopoly, by the power wielded by the Hansa in the political as well as the economic affairs of Northeastern Europe, and, negatively, by the weakness and consequent wavering policy of the kings of Norway. Fortunately, the Black Death gave the Germans an opportunity to strengthen their position in Norway soon after the Counter was established.

The Black Death came into Europe through Crimea in 1346 and reached Norway by English vessels in the fall of 1349. Of all epidemics recorded in history it was indisputably the most horrible. It carried away an appalling number of Norway's small population and paralyzed the merchant class. (1) In the countryside, fields were left untilled and farms deserted. Bergen buried in one day fourteen of her priests; and of the Nidaros cathedral chapter every member died excepting one canon, who was left alone to elect the new archbishop. Norwegian

(1) Barthold, Geschichte der deutschen Hansa, p. 207.

Detmar's contemporaneous account says: "In demesulven eare was pestilenti so groat to lubeke, dat martents dage storven dar vol sesteyn dusent volkes unde do verbarm sik god darover, dat stevent uphelt." Chronik des Franciskaner Lesemeister, " Urkindenbuch der Stadt Lübeck, I, 344.

For the Black Death in Norway (Den store Mannedauden), see Hasund, Det norske folks liv og historie, Chap. III, and Holmsen, Norges Historie, I, 268-287.

historians of the time called the epidemic "the bluish or black death;" in contemporaneous French it was called "the blue death."

It must be said to the credit of the Hansa that at this disastrous period it kept Norway in touch with the outside world and lent the king the money he needed to continue to rule. (1)

It was the great misfortune of Norway that at a time when royal power was weak and the nobility had lost all natural force and spirit there was practically no virile burgher class capable of fighting its own battles or even retaining its former birthright in its own land. Norwegian merchants were faced by the strongest merchant union that has ever been formed in northern Europe, a union whose economic superiority was an insuperable obstacle.

In resisting the foreigners Norwegian cities received little help from their central government. When resistance burst into flames, it was a sporadic and disjointed fight, merely keeping alive exasperated sentiments, but leading to no tangible results. The struggles of Magnus Erikson and his son Haakon to retain the crown of Sweden played their part in the wavering policy of the crown. The constant conflicts to keep the three countries united, the South Jutland struggle, and the disturbances in Holstein all made it necessary for the Norwegian king

(1) Steen, Det Norske Folks Liv og Historie, p. 54.

to keep in mind the wishes of the powerful, wealthy Hanseatic cities and seek their friendly neutrality if not their assistance. (1)

For society as well as for the individual a certain amount of economic security is requisite as a basis for independence. In the Hansa period Norway lacked economic as well as political independence. For a while the Norwegian kings resisted and attempted to keep the ravenous German merchants within bounds, but with the wisdom of the serpent and their power of resistance, they wormed their way ahead. Owing to the growing power of the Hansa League they were soon able to back up their demands with force. After they had become masters of Norwegian trade, they became unreplaceable and caused the country the greatest embarrassment when, during feuds, they suddenly broke off all trade connections. Added to the Hansa's machinations, were inner Norwegian conflicts, power-seeking rulers, avaricious prelates, reckless nobles, and peasants ruled by generally weak and worthless kings who wasted their efforts on unattainable ends, all playing their part in the destruction of Norwegian commerce.

The kings of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark were aware of the financial benefits to be realized from the altered conditions and the expanding commerce. With Hansa tolls and taxes

(1) Bændixen, "De tyske haandverkere paa norsk grund i middelalderen," "Viden selskapets skrifter II, Historisk-Filosofisk Klasse I, (1911) 37.



nobles could be bought or subdued, fiefs withdrawn, and wars of aggrandisement fought. More evil than good resulted from what was taken in by the royal bailiffs, but the lion's share of it went to North Germany and escaped the monarchs. "The laws promulgated by the Danish kings were completely disregarded if unfavorable to the Germans, for they had settled down so slyly and obtained all power in their hands, so that no one could escape their tyranny." (1)

A portion of Norway's trouble with the Hansa was due to her siding with the brave and unscrupulous King Waldemar (2) of Denmark in his long-drawn-out fight with the League. It started by his seizure of Wisby and Gotland in 1361. In this same year both King Magnus of Sweden and King Haakon of Norway confirmed and enlarged the trading privileges of the German cities. (3)

The seizure of Scania, with its valuable herring fisheries in 1361 followed by the conquest of Gotland led to a war with Sweden, allied with the Hanseatic towns, whose interests had naturally been vitally effected. In the spring of 1362 Waldemar defeated decisively a large Hanseatic fleet in the Sound, outside the Scanian fortress of Helsingborg. In this fight the German cities received their baptismal fire. The

(1) Sartorius, Geschichte des hanseatischen Bundes, II, 526.

(2) Waldemar had no sons, but he had two grandsons: Albert, the son of his elder daughter, Ingeborg, and Henry of Mecklenburg; and Olaf, the son of his younger daughter, Margaret, and King Haakon VI of Norway.

(3) H.U., IV, 28.

general pacification which ensued found Waldemar at the height of his power.

The Norwegian king, Haakon VI Magnusson<sup>"</sup> (1343-1380), after having been deprived of the throne of Sweden, had devoted special attention to his own kingdom of Norway. He had seen the injurious effects of the charters and liberties granted the Hanseatic merchants, he was loath to keep the agreements which he had made with them, and he looked for an opportunity to shake off the commercial yoke. He made regulations which favored the native merchants and infringed on the rights of the Germans granted in their charters, and, in the hope of resisting them if they attempted to use force, he made an alliance with King Waldemar of Denmark. The Hanseatic cities saw the dangers. (1)

King Haakon having so rashly joined the Danes in their fight against the German cities, the Bergen Counter was closed in 1368 (2), and the merchants there, as well as in Oslo and Tønsberg, were taken home by a Hansa fleet. (3) War was declared by the League against both kingdoms. Temporarily the Norwegians breathed more freely, for the power of the Germans had become such in Bergen that they had climbed over the fortress wall and forced their way in to the royal governor, Sigurd Hattorsson<sup>"</sup> (4), and made him agree to a confirmation of

(1) Gjerset, History of the Norwegian People, II, 24.

(2) H.U., IV, 239.

(3) H.U., IV, 177; D.N., Feb., Feb. 2, 1368, No. 162, p. 228.

(4) Munch, Det norske folks historie, III<sup>1</sup>, 789.

their earlier privileges, after which they dragged one of his servants from a cloister, beheaded him, and then demanded that the bishop give them absolution and that the city councillors give them favorable judgment in the matter. If they did not, the merchants threatened to return and burn down the bishop's residence. (1) King Haakon refused to confirm their privileges which in 1361 he had only temporarily renewed. (2)

In their attempt to control the merchants a Hansetag which had met in Stralsund in 1367 sent the following letter to the aldermen of the Bergen Counter: "We beg you insistently to keep the peace and concord with the Norwegians and do not consider them all too miserable and stupid. As we have understood there are some among you who are frivolous and loose-mouthed, we beg and desire that you control them, so that they do not use careless and ill-advised words towards lords and gentlemen or other good men. If anyone tries this and the matter is reported to us, we shall judge him in such manner that others will learn a lesson." (3)

By the confederation of the Hansa cities at Cologne in 1367 (4), Lübeck girded its loins for further fight. At their meeting many complaints were heard "of the great harm done to their merchants by the Kings of Denmark and Norway and what they had done to become their enemies." After a Hansa fleet

(1) H.R., II, 12.

(2) Schreiner, Hanseaterne og Norges nedgang, p. 76; H.U., IV, 28.

(3) Bendixen, "Tyske haandverkere paa norsk grund i middelalderen," loc. cit., 40.

(4) "After their disasters, Lübeck as head of the Hansa, appealed to the German Emperor: 'O most merciful Lord, our homeland is so near the seat of your Highness that you could easily rush with armed men to the protection of your small and deserted herd. Our need is well worthy of such a favor'." Hunke, Hanse, Downing Street und deutschlands Lebensraum, p. 19.

had burned and robbed Bergen, Norway sued for peace in 1369. The following year the Hansa appeared in Danish waters, defeated the Danish fleet decisively, captured Copenhagen and the Sound fortresses, and forced Denmark to sign the peace of Stralsund (1370). (1) The Hansa was now completely master of the Baltic. (2)

The terms of this peace were humiliating. (3) The Hansa obtained free passage through the Sound and free trade throughout Danish territory. Hanseatic commissioners were to have charge of the Scanian herring market, appointing their own commissioners there, as well as possession for fifteen years of four royal castles, and two-thirds of all taxes collected by them. The Germans were to have complete freedom of trade in Denmark and exemption from the laws of wreck. It was even agreed that no successor was to be placed on the Danish throne without the consent of the Hansa and then only after he and his councillors had confirmed their privileges. The English and Flemings were to be debarred from trading in Norway.

Norway likewise had to pay dear for its participation. The Dutch, fighting with the cities against Denmark, attacked the Norwegian coast in 1368, doing considerable damage. Queen Margaret in Akershus Castle wrote to her husband, Haakon VI, "... and my servants are in great want of food and drink,

(1) Schafer, Die deutsche Hansa, p. 68; Munch, Det Norske folks historie, II, 70; H.R., I, 523; IV, 527-9.

(2) H.U., IV, 343; H.R., I, no. 492.

(3) H.R., II, 15-16, gives the statement of the ambassadors of the Hansa cities as to the five-year truce concluded with King Haakon of Norway on July 2, 1370, and its later ratification.

neither they nor I receive what we need." (1) While truce had been proclaimed in 1369 and the German merchants had returned, peace was not signed with Haakon VI (2) Magnusson of Norway until 1372. As the peace of Stralsund had founded the Hanseatic commercial dominance in Denmark, so that of Kallundborg (1376) founded it in Norway. (3) The Hansa's independent legal status was now made clear and final, in the form in which it remained until the sixteenth century.

The shoemakers were permitted to brew "mouth-good" for their own use, they might freely and unhindered sell their own wares in Bergen and were free of all taxes. They could buy provisions both in the cities and throughout the countryside, when these were lacking in the market; their shoes and other wares were to be sold for the king's coin, and if this were unobtainable, they were to receive other current means of payment, though they were never to be refused the king's coin. The shoemakers were also given the sole right to practice their trade in Bergen with the single exception of the bishop's shoemaker who was permitted to make shoes for the bishop and his household but none for sale in the city. (4)

The Hansa had reached the apex of its power. Obtaining control of the Sound (5) took its merchants to the height of

(1) Schreiner, Hanseaterne og Norges nedgang, p. 81; Taranger, Norges Historie, III, 186-7.

(2) Schreiner, Hanseaterne og Norges nedgang, p. 80; Taranger, Norges Historie, III, 144.

(3) H.R. I<sup>2</sup>, no. 124.

(4) N.G.L., III, 117.

(5) The waterway separating Sweden from the Danish island of Zealand was called "Noresund" in Hanseatic times and documents.

their career and their long political supremacy in the Baltic.

By the accord of Kallundborg (1) a common, judicial basis was agreed upon for Bergen activities and those of other Norwegian markets. It remained until the sixteenth century. By the terms of this peace not only were all the old German privileges renewed, but the ships of the Hansa obtained the right to enter Norwegian harbors with crow's-nest attached to the mast-head, though they might not lay up to the dock without first lowering it. Such permission acknowledged the Hansa as a belligerent power. The crow's-nest or mers which was originally a look-out barrel, might now be armed and was thus a form of fortress which should be removed when the vessel docked. It was further agreed that the fish brought to Bergen should be sold at a fixed low price to the German merchants. This kept the fishermen in a sort of commercial serfdom.

While Norway was at war with the Hansa, and the German merchants had returned to their home cities, it seemed as if the English might once more regain their Norwegian trade. This gave the Germans grave concern. The century old navigation between England and Norway practically ceased around 1400. That the Hansa at this time obtained a monopoly in Norwegian exports in no wise depended solely upon the fact of the increased

(1) By the peace of Kallundborg, the citizens of the German port cities were in the future to be allowed free access to Norwegian cities and harbors, and they were there to enjoy all privileges ever granted them. If one of them had transgressed the law and a fine were imposed, his debts should be paid before the fine. Nielsen, Bergen, p. 215.

necessity for butter on the Baltic. When the German merchants succeeded in supplanting their English rivals in Norway, this was partly due to the English no longer being able to compete with the Germans in the all-important import of grain. Thanks to the far-reaching change in English agriculture, which reached its climax at the end of the fourteenth century, the grain production and export greatly diminished. The change from large-scale grain production to sheep raising led to limited sales. Along the same lines it likewise caused a change from farming to industry, which may be judged from the rapidly rising curve of cloth exports between 1350 and 1400. (1)

The Black Death was not the principal cause of the Hansa's stranglehold of Norway at the end of the fourteenth century; it was connected with the economic changes in the outside world, the results of which no "national" policy could have hindered. I believe that this mainly explains Norway's unhappy fate during the late middle ages. (2)

When the Germans were obliged to leave Bergen in 1368, upon the Hansa declaring war on Norway, they feared that the English and the Flemings would acquire their business there. (3) But after the accord of Kallundborg such English as ventured to trade in Bergen received no gentle treatment from the Germans.

While certain sporadic English-Norwegian trading was carried on under Richard II, and Norway was particularly happy

(1) From a letter from Professor Johan Schreiner.

(2) Schreiner, Norsk Historisk Tidsskrift, XXXIV, p. 673 (Litteratur).

(3) H.U., IV, no. 257.

to receive English hops with which to brew its lighter beer, trading was practically over by the end of the first quarter of the fifteenth century. In the beginning of the fifteenth century the English hoped they might avoid much of the trouble consequent to trading in Bergen by trading directly with Nordland. They did not get far, for as soon as the Bergen authorities heard what was happening, the councillors complained to the king, who called the attention of the English to the prohibition of foreigners trading north of Bergen. (1)

At the Stralsund meeting of the Hansa in 1370 after the successful conclusion of the war against Denmark and Norway, the minutes mention the presence of delegates from Deventer, Zutphen, and Elburg. These protested at the manner in which they had been treated in Bergen by the Lübeck merchants. Though their equal rights were acknowledged nothing was done in the future to rectify the matter. Lübeck was too powerful. Later in the same year Deventer, Zutphen, and Elburg again complained of their unfair treatment by the Bergen Counter. (2) Being members of the Hansa evidently did not mean equal treatment in the Norwegian market.

King Haakon VI had been respected and beloved by all classes. "The people called him a good man." Despite the fact that he had been forced to confirm the German privileges in Norway he was held in high esteem. (3) Upon his death

- (1) Schreiner, Hanseaterne og Norges nedgang, 93.
- (2) H.R., I, no. 510.
- (3) D.N., VIII, no. 151, Sept. 9, 1343.



in 1380 his and Margaret's son Olaf became king of Norway, his mother acting as regent during his minority. Olaf died early, in 1387, and his mother was elected to succeed him. (1) As she was previously Queen of Denmark, after the death of Olaf, she became ruling queen of both countries. The Danish-Norwegian union was to last from 1380 to 1814. Prior to the following union, Norway had produced some patriotic, though autocratic, rulers. Those days were gone. From now on Norway was to be a milk cow for the German merchants owing to Danish complaisance.

When Waldemar died the Hanseatic cities did not interfere in the election of his successor but they made it clear that they did not thereby abdicate their right, by the 1370 treaty, to do so. (2)

Queen Margaret was one of the most remarkable Northerners of the late Middle Ages. In accepting her as "Norway's mighty lady and rightful master" the electors proclaimed:

We archbishops, bishops, deans, knights and esquires, on our own account and on that of the entire Norwegian Kingdom have accepted, and chosen, with good will, the high-born princess, Lady Margaret, as our and the whole of the Kingdom of Norway's mighty lady and rightful Master, and that Queen Margaret shall be entirely powerful and conduct and rule over the Kingdom of Norway, its land and fortresses, both in the south and the north, over the whole of Norway and all its tributary land during her entire life with God's assistance. (3)

Margaret was a singularly adroit diplomat, clear-headed, kindly, but also firm and wise. In her day there was such peace on land and at sea that every skipper could sail unhindered wherever

(1) Hasund, Det norske folks historie, 1280-1500, III, 180.

(2) Johan Schreiner believes that the choice of Olav as Danish king in 1375 was largely due to the Hansa's wishes. Schreiner, Hanseaterne og Norges nedgang, 88.

(3) N.G.L., Second series, I, 3.

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(3) N.G.L., Second series, I, 3.

he wished. She kept peace with the German cities and kept the laws. (1) The Lubeckers referred to her as "The Lady King." (2) She was the only woman who ever ascended the throne of Norway or Denmark. She conquered all of Sweden except Stockholm (3) in 1389. Her father-in-law, Magnus, King of Norway, had been driven out of Sweden by Albrecht of Mecklenburg. Stockholm was held by Mecklenburgers and the Hansa allies and was being victualled by the redoubtable Vitalien (Victual) Brethren. It finally surrendered to Margaret in 1389. All the privileges claimed by the German cities were renewed. Margaret thus became ruler of all of Scandinavia. (4)

What Margaret accomplished was, according to the Lubeck chronicler Detmar, "much to be wondered at in a woman." (5) Her union policy was, however, entirely a Danish one and by it she broke down the Norwegian central government. Norwegian revenues were largely used by both Margaret and her successor, Erik of Pomerania, for purely dynastic purposes and Danish objectives. (6) Danish or Danish-Germans were sent to Norway to receive lands and govern both State and Church. To further her

(1) Bi eren tiden was so gross vrede to water unde to lande dat en jewelck schipper mochte segolen, wr de wolde ungehindert. Vrede helt se myt den steden, den loven helt se ungebraken. --

(2) Hasund, Det norske folks historie, 1280-1500, III, 180; Daenelle, Die blütezeit der deutschen Hansa, p. 114.

(3) The Germans formed an important part of Stockholm's population. Schlozer, Verfall und Untergang der Hansa, und des deutschen orden, p. 31.

(4) H.G.B., XI, 88.

(5) It is "hoge tho vorwunderende in ener vrouwen." Daenell, Die blütezeit der deutschen Hansa, I, 114.

(6) Overaas og Midgaard, Norges Historie, pp. 60-61.

Scandinavian policy she felt herself forced to reconfirm German privileges, including the German merchants' independence of the Crown. The truth of the matter was she cared very little about Norway. While there was no animosity between the subjects of her three countries, no love was lost between them.

In the year 1394 there arrived in Bergen a scourge even worse than the Hansa in the shape of some five hundred of the Vitalien Brethren (1) in eighteen vessels. They took all they wanted, including whatever vessels were in port. What they could not carry with them they threw overboard. The Vitalien Brethren had begun their career by carrying provisions from their nest in Wisby to Stockholm, which Margaret's partisans were besieging. The crusading order of the Teutonic Knights, founded in the twelfth century, moved to the Baltic in the thirteenth and, urged by the Pope and the Bishop of Riga, sent a great expedition there in 1398, took the city by storm, and so shook the confidence of the pirates that they betook themselves to the North Sea. Their depredations in the Baltic had caused enormous damage. No coast or harbor had been safe from them. "Like birds of prey they swooped down upon the traffic in the Baltic, murdering the crews of captured vessels or simply throwing the men overboard, whether friend or foe." (2) A number of English letters of the time tell of the sufferings

(1) The Vitalienbrüder were pirates who supplied their own needs. This characteristic had nothing to do with the fact that some of them supplied Stockholm with victuals. Bjork, "Piracy in the Baltic, 1375-1378," Speculum, XVIII (1943), 59.

(2) Ibid., p. 260; also *jw wol to wetende worden is dat de serovere groten drepplicher scaden in der se ghedan hebben, scepe unde gud ghenomen hebben unde lude ghevanghen hebben.* H.R. III, no. 99.

of the English merchants: "Pitifully complaining, the merchants of Lenne doe avouch, verifie and affirme, that about the feast of St. George the martyr, in the year of Our Lord 1394, sundry malefactors and robbers of Wismar and Rostok, and others of the Hans, with a great multitude of ships, arrived at the town of Norbern (Bergen) in Norway and tooke the said town by strong assault, and also wickedly and unjustly took all the merchants of Lenne there residing with their goods and chattles and burnt their houses and mansions in this said place and put their persons unto great ransomes." (1)

Piracy seems to have been very much the order of the day and practiced by whomever the occupation profited, whether they were Danish noblemen, Germans settled in Denmark, or adherents of Margaret. She naturally feigned ignorance when the Hansa complained. The Hansa begged the help of England, Scandinavia, and Flanders. The German cities and the Teutonic Order of Knights finally felt themselves obliged to take drastic action, and the merchants decided to equip Friedenschiffe sufficient to cope with the situation and properly patrol the Baltic. The men-of-war (2) were instructed to stay at sea until November 11th by which time the Norwegian autumn fleet with fish was

(1) Hakluyt, The principal navigations, voyages, traffiques and discoveries of the English Nation, I, 347. From this account we must judge that some merchants, at least, were residing in Bergen until the beginning of 1400.

(2) The Lübeck vredescepe were superior to those of other North German ports. In the year 1400, the Cities, in order to fight the Vitalienbruder, fitted out eleven Friedenschiffe, manned by 950 men. Koffmann, "Klaus Stortebeker," H.G.B. III, (1877-79) 38.

expected home in Bergen. (1) When the pirates transferred their nefarious activities to the North Sea, Frisland, and the Norwegian coast were their particular fields of activity and they plundered such English merchantmen as they might be so fortunate as to surprise. The Knights and the Hansa were successful in a number of naval encounters. Some of the pirates who were caught were crammed into fish barrels the end staves of which were nailed down on them so that only their heads protruded. When the vessels reached Lübeck they were rolled in this manner up the streets to the scaffold for execution. (2) They became the classical pirates of the North, and the many years during which they operated despite pursuit speaks eloquently of the dangers of the frequented seas in the late fourteenth century. Maritime trade was a hazardous experience as well as high adventure.

The effects were to be felt for several decades and it rankled for a long time in the minds of the Bergen citizens that a number of the Brethren came from Wismar and Rostock. One of the results of the disaster was that the trade with Nordland and the houses on the Brücke fell into the hands of the Germans.

The Bergen burghers were at the lowest point of their despair. There was, however, still another tribulation in store.

(1) "... de vredescepe scolen bliven an der zee ... to Sante Martins daghe." Bjork, loc. cit., p. 38.

(2) Taranger, Norges Historie, III, 260.

A pirate named Bartolomaus Voet, who had heard of the rich harvest reaped by the Vitalien Brethren some thirty-five years earlier, arrived with a crew of 600 pirates and sacked the city in 1428 and again in 1429. He sold his loot to the city of Hamburg. When the League at long last had succeeded in ridding the seas of the scourge, it promised to indemnify Bergen for Hamburg's behavior. It demanded, however, on behalf of its cities trading in Norway, an entire monopoly of all trade. Bergen was too weak and exhausted to oppose it. As for Voet, he met his well-deserved end by being decapitated. (1)

In 1428, the year of the awful visit of the freebooters, the German merchants had been obliged to leave Bergen after a declaration of war between Erik and the Wendish cities. They returned seven years later and consolidated their power more strongly than ever before.

The freebooters had been dealt with, but there remained the problem of the Union of the Scandinavian states. When Margaret's German nephew, Erik of Pomerania, was crowned king of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden (1397), Norway was treated more and more as a dependency of Denmark, a fate in which she acquiesced with little protest. The most pleasing feature of Norwegian society was the continued prominence of the yeomanry and the free peasantry, odelsbonder and leilendinger (2), but history affords additional proof of the inertness and helplessness of those classes in the Middle Ages unless they had

(1) Nielsen, Bergen, p. 228.

(2) Peasants owning their lands outright and those renting them (often continuously) from the king, the church, or the nobles.

aristocratic leadership. And in Norway the nobility was weak and grew weaker. Conditions favored the establishment of a strong monarchical rule, but the kings were more interested in the affairs of the more prosperous and civilized Denmark or in their efforts to uphold their authority over Sweden. They thus neglected the interests of Norway, giving a very free hand to the Danish officials, not always competent or upright, whom they sent to administer the country. The Hansa feared at first that the Union might lend strength to each of its members. Owing to their constant wars it proved a weakness. And the German cities were to realize that Norway, fettered by a union with Denmark, could even less than previously withstand their Norwegian commercial hegemony.

The heavy taxes laid upon Norway, required by the king's military policy finally resulted in rebellion in Norway in the years 1436-1439 under the leadership of some of the Norwegian noblemen. (1) The union between the three Scandinavian kingdoms, which the vigorous Margaret had succeeded in establishing, soon showed its defects when the weak and vacillating Erik of Pomerania came to the throne. The Swedes were the first to revolt and succeeded in forcing their demands upon King Erik who had turned to the Hansa for help. It was granted on the humiliating condition that he abolish the Sound tolls. Entire eastern Norway soon followed the Swedish suit. The main

(1) Overaas og Midgaard, Norges Historie, p. 61.



Norwegian grievances were the many foreigners that King Erik had appointed to the highest government offices and the unjust taxes that he had imposed. The insurrection, similar to the Swedish one, proved successful. The abolition of the vexatious taxation was granted as also the expulsion of the foreign government and church officials and the return from Denmark to Norway of the great seal of the realm.

Shortly afterwards Erik was deposed and succeeded in the three countries by Christopher of Bavaria.

To fight the Germans became Norway's great problem. They had acquired dangerous power not only in Bergen but now also through the eastern districts of the country. One of the Norwegian leaders, Sigurd Jonsson, stated: "that he would do all in his power to have the Germans thrown out of the country, even if he had to drink water for the rest of his life." (1)

The Council hoped to weaken the Germans by giving English and Dutch merchants letters permitting them to trade in Norway "according to their old privileges." (2) But unfortunately the patriotic efforts of the Council were nullified by the following kings, acting above their heads. He gave the Rostock merchants all the privileges they demanded in Oslo and Tønsberg (3), thus making them complete masters of the East Norwegian markets for a couple of generations.

(1) H.R. II<sup>2</sup>, no. 590, 7. Another of the country's leaders, Erlend Endridsson, stamped the ground and in so doing said he thought no more of the German cities than the sand under his sole.

(2) Overaas and Midgaard, Norges Historie, p. 62.

(3) Ibid.

The kings were generally abroad and after 1442 almost invariably German. The help of the German cities had weighed heavily in bringing about the election of Christopher of Bavaria in 1442. Such being the case, though he at least made an effort to place legal barriers to the commercial domination of the Bergen Counter, he naturally accomplished nothing. He and his successor, Christiern I, were powerless and penniless and entirely in the power of their nobles and the German cities. "The Hansa," Christopher declared, "has more privileges and liberties in my countries than the King." How low he had sunk is shown by the treaty he signed as King of Denmark in 1439 with the Hansa, by which the League was to assist him in bringing peace and order into his own kingdom. In 1445, with the consent of the Norwegian Council, all privileges granted by his predecessors to the Hanseatic cities were once more accorded them. (1)

There was, as usual, trouble in Bergen with the shoemakers, between them and the Norwegians as also between them and the Counter. The Norwegian knight and royal Councillor, Olav Nilsson<sup>"</sup> til Tagløy, upon the order of King Christiern I, issued an order in 1455 placing them under royal jurisdiction. Then, leading the Bergen citizens, he attacked the Counter. Their efforts failed and Olav Nilsson<sup>"</sup>, after having summoned the merchants of the Counter to meet him at Jonsvollen, was forced to flee to Munkeliv Cloister. As religion forbade his

(1) D.N., VII, no. 427 (Sept. 25, 1445).

pursuers to slay him there, they set fire to the buildings and burned up not only the Knight, but Bishop Torleiv and many of his men. The craven King, deeply in Hansa debt, dared make neither reprisals nor demands. (1)

(1) Nielsen, Bergen, pp. 256-262; Taranger, Norges historie, III, 2, p. 115.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Outside Influences Replacing Former Hanseatic Unity; the Dissolution of the Hanseatic League

It will be recalled that the Hanseatic League grew out of the trade developed in the thirteenth century and later between the Baltic cities and Norway on the one hand and between the Baltic and Western Europe on the other. We have seen the growth of Lübeck's position of leadership in the League by virtue of her strategic position commanding the shortest land route to the North Sea and the Rhineland and by the energy of her merchants. With the spread of population east of the Elbe the Lübeckers found a ready market for the dried fish which they brought from Norway, and by gaining control of the Lüneburg salt mines and monopolizing the Baltic grain supplies they gained also a commanding position in trade with Norway and the West and easily dominated the Hanseatic League itself.

Nowhere was the power of Lübeck seen more complete in its exercise than in the growing commercial city of Bergen, which from the thirteenth century was the center for trade in the Norwegian fish from the Nordland and for barter in other goods. The breaking of the economic hold of Lübeck was concurrent with the dissolution of the League itself, brought about by a changing economic pattern, an examination of which

is necessary to an understanding of the decline of the power of the Hansa.

The fact that the first city of the Hanseatic League had the upper hand in the Brücke gave the Counter a unique fighting capacity in contending with rivals outside the Hansa. In fighting to keep Norwegians and Englishmen from independent participation in the Bergen trade, the Lübeckers proved zealous spokesmen and champions of common Hanseatic interests. Little by little, however, a difference arose of a very serious character which the Lübeckers in the Counter proved incapable of surmounting. It became increasingly clear that Lübeck's economic interests differed greatly from those of the other Hanseatic cities. Even though the League in name continued to exist until the second half of the seventeenth century, unified action soon was gone and fellowship an empty phrase. With this evident, the organization of the Brücke revealed itself as an instrument in the hands of the Lübeckers which acted contrary to the interests of other Hanseatic cities.

In the later history of the Counter, which will now be described, the internal conflict between the different Hanseatic cities became increasingly clear. As time passed it became more and more evident that the conflict of the Counter was directed against the Hanseatic's unwillingness to dance to Lübeck's tune. The German dominion in Bergen was not undermined by competitors outside the Hansa but by the rift within

the League itself. The Hanseatic dominion in Norway ceased owing to collapse of the inner Hanseatic front. What happened in Norway was merely a reflection of the changes in the east-west trade, which played a much greater part than the connections with Norway. The Hanse League was no hand and fast organization nor was it intended as a governmental power or military coalition. Nothing but economic interests caused the united action of the long list of Hanseatic cities stretching from the British Channel to the Gulf of Finland. Their purpose was to safeguard the life and prosperity of the merchants during their stay in foreign cities and countries; union was requisite in order to assert the privileged legal position which the trading Hanseatics had been able to acquire abroad at the expense of foreign rivals. All this however played a secondary role. The main point was that there was common agreement as to trading methods, and the way they were practised. As long as this condition prevailed the Hanseatic League remained strong. When it was gone the League was gone. And that was what happened during the first part of the sixteenth century.

Fellowship and unity continued as long as the east-west trade merely followed the old road over Holstein. During the period when this line of traffic was the only one considered, there was agreement in the decisive questions of commercial policy. Differences of opinion arose when another transportation route was broached, namely the direct sailing through the

Sound, and it proved the decisive break in the history of the Hanseatic League. This innovation in transportation had started, to a minor extent as early as 1200, but only in the early years of the fourteenth century had it become serious and in the sixteenth century it became the decisive factor in the economic life of northern Europe.

All transport over the Halstein tongue of land was done by wagons between the Elbe and Oldesloe, and by river lighters along the Trave, by the mouth of which lay Lübeck. The re-loading was of little consequence when articles of luxury or costly piece-goods were concerned. As long as the Baltic trade was primarily in such articles as Flanders cloth, metal goods from Brabant or spices brought from the west and furs, honey, wax, amber, hides, or tallow from the east, the route past Lübeck was most serviceable. But it became all too expensive and inconvenient when it was a question of cheap goods in large quantities. This became a serious actuality around 1500.

The need of salt for the Scania herring had already grown to such an extent in the thirteenth century that the deliveries of Lüneburg salt found it difficult to meet the demand. By degrees it thus became usual for the western participants in the Sound fisheries to bring with them a portion of the salt they themselves required. This was the so-called Baiesalt, produced on the southwestern coast of France. This sea-salt was considerably less expensive than the Lüneburg and could be procured in unlimited quantities.

The supply of Baiesalt to the Baltic countries was soon so extensive that that of Lübeck<sup>"</sup> completely lost in the fifteenth century even its Polish and Russian markets, where it had previously been exclusively used. In the matter of the herring a corresponding change took place. As previously mentioned, the herring fisheries of the Sound were greatly reduced in the fifteenth century. (1) On the other hand they increased in the North Sea, and there it was not the Hanseatics, but Englishmen and particularly Netherlanders who participated. They had been taught by the Hansa merchants in Scania how to salt the fish plentifully and how to barrel them, technicalities previously unknown in Holland and which had consequently been drawbacks in the development of the North Sea catch.

While the Sound fishing was undertaken from small boats and along the shore that of the Netherlanders was deep-sea fishing from light, sea-worthy sailboats. As the North Sea fisheries developed and spread over the sea, right across to England and Scotland, an increasing number of herring-smacks were required. As they had to be filled rapidly they were not large. As they had to bring their cargo ashore quickly, they were fast sailors. By degrees a large and first class fleet grew up during the fifteenth century. The catch itself did not last many months. During the rest of the year the herring-smacks were otherwise engaged and principally in the export of the herring, and fetching salt in western France, etc.

(1) By 1492 the number of barrels of herring imported by Lübeck<sup>"</sup> had declined to 13,794. From a letter from Professor Johan Schreiner.



Before 1400 North Sea herring had replaced the Scanian in the western German market, and it did not take long before Netherlands vessels were also carrying it to the Baltic.

It thus went with the herring as it had with the salt: when they had previously been Hanseatic articles of export, they now were brought by others to the Baltic. In return for the salt and herring were given grain and lumber. (1)

The import of breadstuffs to the industrial districts of Flanders and Brabant and the fishing and shipping districts of the Netherlands had generally been no greater than could usually be supplied by southern English or northern French imports. It was unnecessary to bring grain the long way from the Baltic. The situation had not previously required Hanseatic sales of grain in larger quantities to western Europe. This changed after the middle of the 1400's, and in the following centuries there was a great increase in the need of Baltic grain. After about 1500 the Hollanders became steady purchasers of all they could obtain from the regions around the Baltic.

Lumber just like grain, was essentially an article to be shipped in large, heavy quantities, unfitted for the costly and unpractical reshipments over Lübeck, but suitable for the direct route through the Sound. The greater such east-west traffic became, the more did the old Holstein trade route suffer.

(1) Needed by the Netherlands for shipbuilding and barrel staves.

Such a complete revolution meant that the entire Lübeck groundwork gave way; the city lost its control of the herring and salt trade and the new import of such goods came through the Sound, where the small herring-packets could sail with lower freight rates than the great, expensive slow-sailing Hansa koggen, with their large crews.

If the vessels which passed through the Sound had been satisfied with heavy freight and left the lighter, more costly freight to the Holstein route, the new orientation might not have become such a blow for Lübeck. But furs and cloth took up little room and provided good additional freight for vessels loaded with grain or salt. A division of the freight thus proved impossible despite all Lübeck's efforts. The greatest problem of the commercial policy during the fifteenth century was to attempt to retain the so-called staple goods on the Trave-Elbe route.

Around 1400 English, and particularly Netherland vessels, called at Baltic ports, particularly at Danzig, Reval, and Riga. Such Hanseatic towns found thereby a welcome opportunity to free themselves from the hands of Lübeck, and no longer merely to act as employees of the powerful Trave city. Partnership with the Hansa's principal competitors enabled them to develop independently. Even if these eastern Hanseatic cities sent representatives to the Hansetage, their loyalty too was gone as early as the fifteenth century. They realized

that progress depended upon their Sound traffic connections, which spelled danger for Lübeck, and this single city was incapable of arresting a development in which merchants of many other Hanseatic ones were directly interested.

The Netherlanders thus did not face a united Hanseatic resistance. On the contrary, the commercial power of the Netherlands which supplanted the Hansa during the fifteenth century, developed hand in hand with the larger portion of the German maritime cities. This did not merely mean such Baltic ports as Danzig, Riga and Reval, but North Sea ports such as Bremen and Hamburg, which played a very modest part in medieval interchange of goods but now obtained a rich share in the mighty expansion led by the Netherlanders. The vessels sailed in increasing numbers in company with the Dutch to Baltic ports. The cancelling by Hamburg, in the fifteen thirties, of all Lübeck companionship was a milestone in North European commercial policy. Hamburg had, as a member of the Hanseatic League, acted as Lübeck's North Sea port. It lay at the western end of the Holstein trade-route and was consequently more closely connected with Lübeck than any other city. The Hamburg-Lübeck agreement of 1241, formed in order to protect the trade between the two cities, gave, as earlier mentioned, the impetus to the formation of the Hanseatic League. Hamburg now leaving it meant in reality its dissolution, even if it continued functioning for over a century.

Members left it in both the east and the west. Lübeck was left isolated on all sides, as the last defender of a system the others had grown out of. Modern German historians are

mistaken when they contend that the decline of the League was due to the lack of any national government behind it. As long as the League's members were deserting it, no backing of any government power could save it.

We have a good though incomplete record of the tremendous growth of the Baltic trade of the sixteenth century in the Sound shipping records. In 1497 about eight hundred vessels passed through it; during the period 1536-1547 an average of fourteen hundred; in 1557-1558, twenty-two hundred and fifty; in the 1560's an average of more than three thousand; in the 1570's, four thousand three hundred a year; and in the 1590's, five thousand six hundred. On the basis of these figures the commercial connections between the Baltic countries and Western Europe had in the sixteenth century increased seven fold. In 1500 the Netherlands had 40% of the Sound traffic. A century later 70%, while that of the Hanseatic cities was merely 17.5%. "Despite the fact that the Lübeck authorities did all in their power to stop or hinder the change in trade routes, they participated in the new Sound traffic and their vessels took part in bringing Sea salt from France or Portugal to the Baltic. But the German merchants' extraordinary ability in adjusting themselves to new conditions, could not stop the Netherlands' expansion from greatly exceeding their own. The power and prosperity of the Hanseatics rested on different ways of doing business and quite an economic and geographic basis, which has now become obsolete." (1)

(1) Schreiner, "Arsakene til den hanseatiske handels tælbekgang i det 16 Arhundre," Nordisk Tidskrift, 1934 (Stockholm), p. 450.

Lübeck's position, also changed in Norway. Though the Norwegian connection was of secondary importance compared to the east-west trade, it reflected, however, also the change in conditions there. The Counter's superiors would not hear of new customs cropping up in Bergen. The Lübeckers stated that their demands were made owing to common interests, but they were in reality dictated by the wish to safeguard Lübeck's position in relation to the other Hanseatic cities. In the name of the League, Lübeck conducted its campaign on all fronts against all who were submitting to the new conditions. It characterized as "private trade," or "personal profit" every attempt at abandoning the old Hanseatic trade principles. There was nothing similar in Bergen to the mighty Netherlands' expansion in Sound sailings during the fifteen hundreds. One would have thought that all the time the Netherlands vessels fetched huge quantities of Baltic corn, they would have commenced competing with the Bergen Counter. The fact is, however, that the Netherlands corn merchants, during the sixteenth century, never made any serious attempt to enter the fish trade. This is explained by the Hanseatic credit system in Bergen. The German Counter's system of furnishing the fishermen with what they required was so well organized and established that it would have taken a great deal of time and effort to stop it. The Nordland fishermen were economically tightly bound to the merchants of the Brücke and would have experienced much unpleasantness by severing their connections with the all-powerful attitude assumed by the Brücke, the Netherlanders probably

preferred to carry the Baltic grain to other West-European countries, where it was far easier to do business. As there were plenty of buyers for every cargo of Baltic grain, it mattered little whether the Hanseatics were left alone in their Bergen trade.

But there was another difference. The new orientation of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Bergen did not include new kinds of goods. The dried fish and grain remained the two principal articles, exactly as they had from the origin of their exchange in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

We have to look elsewhere for the great change in the Bergen trade. It depended first of all on the change of the export routes of the dried fish. Norwegian fish products were no longer preferably shipped to Lübeck or other Wendish neighbor cities on the Baltic but were, in increasing amounts, sent to the west Hanseatic cities, Hamburg and Bremen, and particularly to the port cities of the Rhine arm, the Ysel, which descends into the Zuidorsee near Deventer.

After the western Germans, who around 1100 were the principal carriers of Bergen dried fish, had been displaced by the Baltic Germans, they were obliged to obtain their Norwegian fish in Lübeck. From there the fish was transported over land by carts to the Rhine district and the German centers. Distances were long and the transportation costs consequently high, with the result that the fish were expensive. For the western consumers, it would be a tremendous advantage if the freight

could be brought by sea or river-carriage. Such a change had the further advantage that the transport profits would accrue to west-German merchants in place of the Lübeckers and their neighbors.

In order to protect themselves against such a threat, the Counter's grain importers had maintained the principle that only he who brought grain to Bergen could take back fish. But as early as 1400 there were signs that something was brewing. The merchants of the most western group of Hanseatic cities, namely those on the eastern side of the Zuidersee, began carrying Bergen fish directly to their home cities. While it had earlier been the common custom that the grain vessels took back fish to Baltic ports, from now on it became increasingly usual for them to take fish products west across the North Sea. The Lübeckers and their eastern neighbors lost their monopoly of the export of Norwegian fish which they had seized in the middle of the thirteenth century.

This change was introduced in the sixteenth century by the rise of the great yearly markets in Deventer. Sea-going vessels could by the Ysel reach up to the city, and by lighters the goods were carried inland up to Cologne. Great numbers of traders from western Germany congregated in Deventer during the market period, as did goods from northern and eastern Europe. But Deventer specialized in one article above all others and that was Bergen fish. It was fetched in Deventer by buyers from Cologne and Frankfurt-am-Main, who sold, what their own cities did not need to others. A long row of flowering and populous

industrial and trading centres along the Rhine and its arms are mentioned as important purchasers of Norwegian fish products.

Deventer's prosperity was merely a link in the common economic development which brought the whole Holland-Hamburg stretch into the foreground. While the Hollanders particularly took the Baltic trade, the merchants of Deventer turned to Bergen, where they soon were followed by those of Bremen and Hamburg. These Hanseatic merchants had the advantage over Lübeck of large, navigable rivers. The citizens of Bremen (1), Hamburg and Deventer soon became dangerous competitors of the Lübeck Bergenfahrer in the western sale of fish.

It is true that the Deventers had no grain to take to Bergen in exchange for the fish, for the Rhine basin had no superfluity permitting export. Even if Bremen and Hamburg in this respect were in a slightly better position, these Hanseatic cities did not receive sufficient grain from their hinterland to satisfy Norwegian requirements. The west Germans thus were entirely unable to replace the Baltic people as furnishers of the articles most needed by the Northerners. The Lübeckers endeavored to make the most of this at the Counter. The Lübeck authorities tried in every manner to put difficulties in the way of the West-Germans who came with their vessels to Baltic ports in order to fetch grain; while in Norway the Counter's policy was to control the Bergen grain trade. They took every possible step to hinder the shipment of more Baltic grain to Norway than

(1) J.S., 214, 230.



the amounts the Eastern merchants themselves needed in order to obtain in Bergen a return cargo, to be carried home, of dried fish. It insisted that the Hanseatics from western cities to obtain neither in Baltic ports nor in Bergen the grain needed in exchange for fish. Such efforts could only succeed if the citizens of Lübeck and neighboring cities saw that their own interests were best served by keeping to the instructions of the Counter. Such was however not the case. If the western Hanseatic merchants could take home across the North Sea as much Bergen fish as they did, this was because they had no difficulty in purchasing in Baltic ports or in Bergen the grain with which to pay for the fish.

Here was the great, and for the Lübeckers, fateful change. There was a particular reason for their inability any longer, as in previous centuries, to regulate the Bergen grain deliveries. The tremendous metamorphosis in prices, characteristic of the sixteenth century, was the cause of it all. Grain was in a class by itself among a great many commodities that had gone up in price. From 1520 to 1570 the exchange value of the grain of the Hanseatics increased about 100% in relation to Norwegian fish. For the same quantity of imported German articles the Northerners in 1570 had to deliver twice as much dried fish as they had half a century previously.

We can follow the change in the city of Leyden during the period 1501-1520 to 1580. Taking the price at the beginning of the century at par by 1580 rye soared to 435, barley to 347, oats to 338, and wheat to 336. The dried fish statistics are

lacking but the price of herring was, in 1580, 233, as against 100 during the period 1501-20. The fish had thus increased in price only one-half as much as had the principal breadstuff needed by Norwegians. (1) While the dried fish prices remained stable in Augsburg from 1530 to the 1590's, the price of rye had doubled. (2) The tendency was about the same in Munich during the sixteenth century, though the difference between the price rise of herring and dried fish on one side and grain on the other was not so great in this city. (3)

It is quite true that the Hanseatic merchants of the Baltic cities were obliged to purchase the grain from the producers at much higher prices than previously, and the main profit was reaped by the producer rather than the middleman. Nevertheless the merchants did a profitable business, and knew that he who could obtain the much required grain had every chance of doing a splendid business in Bergen. There they came, one after the other, to the increasing anxiety of the leaders of the Counter. This was the cause of the Counter's greatest worries, as may be seen from many a sixteenth century letter. The great and uncontrolled import of grain to Bergen lay at the root of the evil, and was the reason for all the Aldermen's concern. And all the greater was their anxiety when the grain

(1) Forthumus, De geschiedenis van de leidsche Lakenindustrie, II, (s-Gravenhage 1939) p. 188.

(2) Elsas, Umriss einer Geschichte der Froise und Lohne in Deutschland von ausgehended Mittelalter bis zum Beginn des 19 Jahrhunderts, I (Leiden 1936), 396-594,

(3) Ibid., p. 560 and 566.

importers sold their goods, wherever dried fish was obtainable, with no thought as to the traditional Bergen rules regarding commercial transactions.

Owing to the increased possibilities of profits, brought about by the increased prices, Baltic Germans obtained a certain compensation for the loss of their old monopoly of the Bergen trade. That many of their vessels were obliged to return in ballast because fish goods went another way, was counterbalanced by the higher prices received for their grain. But the economic compensation which the East Germans thus obtained, merely contributed to precipitate the expansion of the western Hanseatic cities. The Lübeckers and their neighbors were during the sixteenth century reduced to a subordinate position in the Bergen market. Before the century was over Lübeck's leadership had been taken over by Bremen.

That Deventer did not assume it was due to the disaster which came upon the city during the revolt of the Netherlands against Philip II in the 1570's. Even more important was possibly the fact that the sand which blocked the Ysel made it unnavigable for sea-going vessels. In all cases, the Hanseatic city by the Zuidersee lost its central position as a western fish market. Bremen took its place, and the merchants of this city at the end of 1500 obtained the upper hand in the Brücke. The Counter ceased during the last years of the 1500's to represent Lübeck's power policy and many of its members became Norwegian instead of German traders.

As long as the Baltic Hanseatic cities controlled both grain imports and fish exports there was no chance for the development of an independent burgher class in Bergen. The entire foreign trade was in the hands of the Counter. But from the moment that the Hanseatic of the North Sea and Zuidersee took up the Bergen trade on a large scale, a change arose. Then there was room for a middleman between importer and exporter. The change in trade relations gave thus the impetus to Norwegian activity independent of the Counter. For the first time for a couple of centuries there was during the sixteenth century again a native burgher class in Bergen. This was first of all due to the fact that foreigners, Hollanders, Scotsmen and Germans, found that it paid to settle down on Stranden, directly opposite the Brücke. (1) This change in Bergen's history happened around 1540. The citizens of Bergen then recommenced sailing to Nordland just as they had around the middle of the fourteenth century. The plentiful and regular arrivals of grain which now came to Bergen enabled the citizens to seek out the northern fishing districts, and the dried fish which they purchased there was sold in Bergen to western Germans and Deventers. The transport of fish from northern Norway to Bergen became the principal activity of the occupants of Stranden.

The Bergenfahrer Society and the Counter were not content with attempting to prevent by their own efforts all undesirable trade tendencies in Bergen. They time and again secured

(1) J.S., p. 8.

the support of meetings of the Wendish cities and Hansetage, despite the fact that the burghers of both Wendish and other Hanseatic cities, both in the east and the west, had different economic interests. The Lübeckers likewise attempted through agreements with the Danish-Norwegian crown to obtain help against the Bergen burghers. Time and again throughout 1500, and particularly during the last third of the century both sides met for negotiations.

In the actual development, the description of which has been attempted, such agreements and injunctions had little effect. Development continued independent of promises and decisions. They form, however, an interesting chapter in the history of Bergen trade during the sixteenth century.

The Bergen question must have seemed a quite secondary one to the governing authorities in Copenhagen. Prior to 1523 the thought of conquering Sweden was the chief concern in Danish-Norwegian foreign policy. They realized that Denmark-Norway needed Lübeck as an ally, or at least as a friendly observer. But the Lübeckers would not give their support for nothing; they demanded in return that the King should help them against the Bergen citizens. This he agreed to do — though his assent meant nothing.

After 1523, when Christiern II was expelled from Denmark-Norway, as also with Lübeck assistance, from Sweden, the fear of possible help which he might obtain dictated the attitude of the new Danish-Norwegian king. After the death of Frederik I

in 1533 when civil war had broken out in Denmark, the Lübeckers thought the time had come to obtain the political leadership of the country. The attempt ended in a decided defeat in 1536 and thenceforth Lübeck's old political leadership in North-Europe and particularly in the North was gone.

But Lübeck's defeat did not at all mean that the Copenhagen government could overlook the Hanseatic city as an ally. The fact was that the mightiest prince in Europe, the Hapsburg Emperor Charles V, who was Christiern II's brother-in-law, supported his heirs and wanted them on the Danish-Norwegian throne and even on the Swedish. Impressed by such a threat the new Danish-Norwegian king, Christian III, attempted to retain a friendship with Lübeck and that meant that he ostensibly agreed with its views in questions regarding Bergen.

The situation changed in 1544 when Denmark-Norway at length obtained peace and conciliation with Charles V. The authorities in Copenhagen were now no longer bound by the fear of Lübeck, but could support an anti-Lübeck policy in Bergen. From 1545 on the king gave open support to the Bergen burghers, whether it was a question of permitting the new Bergen sailings to the fishing districts in Nordland, or easing the free trade in grain, which the Counter wished by all means to hinder.

After 1545 negotiations were regularly held but always ended in an unsatisfactory manner to the Lübeckers of the Brücke. In 1560 they were, however, able to obtain a somewhat friendlier

attitude on the part of the government in Copenhagen. Again it was other considerations which brought about the change. Owing to the strained relations with Sweden, the Danish-Norwegian king felt obliged to show greater circumspection. Feeling war might be declared, it was imperative to obtain Lübeck's assistance or at least friendly neutrality.

By the time of the 1560 meeting, direct negotiations between the Counter's representatives and the Crown were practically ended.

In Bergen custom accounts we can read how the Baltic Hanseatic cities had lost their old leadership in Bergen in the decades after 1520. During a little more than a generation their participation in Bergen sailings was reduced from four-fifths to a little over one-half of the total number. Custom accounts from around 1600 show that the change ended during these decennials and the displacement did not continue.

What this displacement from east to west in reality meant is shown by the 1577 accounts, which with the list of vessels also gives us the kind of freight which every foreign vessel discharged and loaded in Bergen.

Of the total grain import to Bergen in 1577 Hanseatic Baltic vessels brought 82%, while the western cities brought 12%; in addition a Holland vessel brought  $5\frac{1}{2}\%$  and a Scotch  $1\frac{1}{2}\%$ . More than  $\frac{4}{5}$ ths was brought by Baltic vessels.

The Baltic received in 1577, only 20% of the dried fish exported by foreign vessels, 59% was carried by skippers from the

western cities, while the Hollanders carried 19% and a vessel from the duchy of Oldenburg 2%. Here we thus find the reverse conditions; that is, only a fifth of the fish carrying vessels came from Baltic cities. We see from the accounts that the Lübeckers were able to retain their old position in the Bergen shipping until the 1560's. During 1518-21 they handled 44% of Baltic sailings and this percentage remained approximately constant until 1569. But in 1577 the figure had sunk to 30% and there was no later increase. According to the 1577 records the Lübeck grain imports that year amounted to only 37% of that brought by Baltic vessels.

These figures show that Lübeck's predominance on the Brücke had long been much greater than the city's own participation in Bergen sailings legitimized. The Lübeckers power in the Counter was merely a reflection of the city's dominating position in the east-west trade. This Lübeck domination which throughout so many years of conflict gave the Counter a particular character, was at no time a true expression of the best interests of the grain-importers. The stiff-necked attitude of the Aldermen in regard to the new commercial situation which had arisen in Bergen, was never supported by more than one half of the merchants who sent grain to Norway.

The average number of all Hanseatic vessels which came to Bergen during the years 1518-21 was 67. In 1567 they amounted to 77 and in 1577, 78, corresponding to approximately 113 and 115% of the arrivals around 1520. A decided increase took place at



the end of the sixteenth century. The corresponding number of all ships calling during each of the three years May 1st, 1597 to May 1st, 1600 was 188, which meant an increase of 280% in comparison with the 1520 level. This increase disappears however when we place it beside the number of Hanseatic vessels which during the same period passed through the Sound.

The percentage distribution is shown by the following:

<u>Home ports</u>	<u>1582</u>	<u>1567</u>	<u>1577</u>	<u>1597-1599</u>
Lübeck	100	152	693	511
Rostock	100	350	1,800	2,510
Hamburg	100	531	-	692
Bremen	100	1,650	3,150	4,067
The four united	100	353	-	1,056

Interpreted against the background of the numbers of sailings through the Sound the impression of the rise in Bergen sailings becomes entirely changed. Relatively we face a violent retrogression.

The tremendous trade increase in the sixteenth century between West-Europe and the Baltic was due to two developments. First, there was a great quantity of new articles of trade. While articles of luxury and piece goods had previously played a very considerable part, the Baltic trade after 1500 was marked by heavy goods requiring great freight space. Secondly new West European territories were included in the centuries old east-western interchange of goods. France which had previously lain outside the Hanseatic sphere of activities now became an important furnisher of salt. New markets were opened for Baltic products. The Netherlanders sold timber to the west, and to

south European countries which lacked forests. Grain was needed everywhere and the Netherlanders sold it not only in the Rhenish region and France, but in Spain, Portugal and Italy. Despite the war against Spain, Netherland vessels brought Baltic grain regularly to Spanish ports.

If we now turn back to the Bergen trade, we have already seen that no new export articles entered into northern trading during the sixteenth century. Dried fish was and remained the principal article. Another important fact was that the Norwegian fish did not reach new markets during the fifteen hundreds. It went principally to the populous cities of the Rhine valley and south Germany. Newfoundland fish came to western Europe proper as a great novelty and entirely captured the market. (1) Norwegian dried fish found for the first time a competition on the European continent which hindered any development in Norway comparable to the advances in the east-west trade. These are the reasons for the noticeable difference in the curve of growth between the traders of Bergen and the Baltic countries in the sixteenth century. It is thus shown that the development of prices in the sixteenth century was unprofitable for Norway. Norwegian products lost in value as compared to articles of import. The Norwegians had to produce much more in order to receive the same amount of grain, and Norwegian fish lost its leadership now that a rival had appeared on the scene. As a furnisher of goods Norway relatively receded considerably during the century. Norwegian forest products became for the

(1) J.S., p. 344.

first time a factor of importance on the world market. The Hollanders carried lumber not only from the Baltic countries but also, and to a greater extent, from East-Norwegian ports, even though its quality was inferior to that of Baltic.

But in the trade of Bergen the profit no longer benefitted the foreigners as previously. A native mercantile class was fighting its way towards a position as an independent participant in trade where foreigners had previously taken all the profit.

All the same, it was to take centuries before the Norwegian citizens of Bergen obtained the upper hand in the fishing trade. In that the Bergen merchant had not only the Hanseatics as competitors but also the Hollanders, who, during the seventeenth century became the dominant trading nation in Bergen, as they had already become in the Baltic in the sixteenth.

It might be concluded that while the Hanseatic League contributed to the economic development of Norway, the decline of the League and the consequent loosening of the hold of Lübeck upon Bergen and the Nordland was a benefit to Norwegians who had been kept for centuries from reaping their fair share of the rewards of the commerce of their own country.

### Note on Sources

The principal archives containing material of interest for a history of the Hanseatic establishment at Bergen are to be found in Germany, mainly in the city of Lübeck, and in Bergen. In Lübeck there are the records of the Lübeck Chamber of Commerce and the Bergenfahrer Library, housed in the Maria Kirche. (1) In Bergen there are two rich depositories: The Bergen Historical Museum and the Hanseatic Museum. Representatives of these two institutions have been among the most tireless of Norwegian scholars in making trips to Wendish cities of the Hansa League as well as to Hamburg to study, copy, or photostat materials relating to Hanseatic-Norwegian relations.

Many important documents on the Hanseatic League have been published in the Hanse-Recesse und andere acten der Hansetage, the Hansisches Urkundenbuch, the Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lübeck, and the Quellen und Darstellungen zu hansischen Geschichte. The twenty-three volumes of the Hanse-Recesse, published between 1870 and 1897 by the Historische Commission bei der königliche Academie der Wissenschaften, contain many of the important treaties, letters, and other documents that passed, during the years 1265-1530, between the Hansa cities,

(1) Named der Trese (the treasure). In the ancient room of archives in the Maria Kirche one found a collection of acts and documents with seals attached, from German Hanseatic cities, also privileges granted the Hansa and letters addressed to it from foreign powers and princes. W. Vogel, "La Hanse," Revue historique, CLXXIX (1937), 33.

foreign governments, municipalities, merchants, counters, and individuals. They have been copied from the originals in the archives of the various governments that dealt with the Hansa League and from those of its member cities. They are in Latin or the low German of the day. Records of the meetings of the Hansa League are included with historical expositions of the circumstances necessitating their calling. They supplement or repeat some of the documents in the Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lübeck and the Quellen und Darstellungen zu hansischen Geschichte. The Hansische Urkundenbuch was published between 1876 and 1903 in nine volumes by the Verein für hansische Geschichte, each volume containing from 800 to 1300 documents, spanning the period 970-1470. It states: Reichhaltig die in diese Bände mitgetheilte Ueber-  
lieferung zur Geschichte des hansische Kontore. The Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lübeck, or Codex Diplomaticus Lübecensis, the principal numbers of which came from the two principal Lübeck libraries, the Treze and the Registratur, was published in three volumes, the first in 1843 and the last in 1935, by the Verein für lübeckische Geschichte, each volume contains some 750 documents. These include a great number of the official documents that passed between the Lübeck city authorities and various governments, popes, emperors, prelates, potentates, and neighboring states and cities, including primarily Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Schleswig, and Holstein, from 1139 to 1537. The Quellen und Darstellungen zu hansischen Geschichte has appeared in nine volumes, It is concerned particularly with foreign commercial relations.

The Niederstadtbuch of Lübeck<sup>"</sup> contains regulations issued by the City Council pertaining to debts, legacies, family affairs and the life of its merchants.

The two most important collections of published documents on medieval Norway are Norges gamle Love and the Diplomatarium Norvegicum. Norges gamle Love reproduces in its first five volumes Norway's laws up to 1447, the last four, the period 1448-1482. The great courts of law from the Viking Age were, in the northern and central Norwegian territory of Trøndelag, the Frostating; in southwestern Norway, surrounding the Sogne-Fjord, the Gulating; and in eastern Norway, the Eidsivating. The laws of the first two courts were perhaps written down around 1100 and were in force until Magnus Lagabøter's (1) new laws supplanted them, during the years 1274-1276, wherever court was held. This revision created uniform law for the land and contained many ordinances for Bergen covering its trade and the activities of foreign merchants, particularly those of the Bergen Counter. The laws mirror social conditions, mercantile regulations, and judicial proceedings, and are, naturally, written in Old Norse. The Diplomatarium Norvegicum is a collection of twenty large volumes, published between 1847 and 1919 by the first Norwegian historical scholars of their day. They comprise ancient letters, charters, and public and private documents, giving information about Norway's domestic and foreign policy, languages, families, customs, statutes, and judicial proceedings principally from

(1) Lagabøter<sup>"</sup> means the Lawgiver.

the Middle Ages. The documents have been culled not only from the Scandinavian Government's archives and the principal Scandinavian libraries but also from the Library of the Vatican, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the English university libraries, and other sources. They cover the period 1196-1622 and are mainly in Latin, Norwegian, and Danish. A number of the original letters contained in the collection were preserved in Copenhagen; unfortunately they were burned in the great fire of 1928.

The unpublished letters used by German writers on the topic are to be found in the archives of the various Hansa cities in Germany, the Netherlands, and England. They cover trading between the Hansa cities and Norway down to the middle of the sixteenth century. The Danzig Stadtarchiv as well as the archives of Rostock, Stralsund, Wismar, and Riga contain letters, diplomas, and other material at present unavailable owing to the Russian occupation.

Among the many documents in the Royal Library in Copenhagen concerning relations between the Danish-Norwegian Governments and its Councillors and the Hanseatic cities, those from the reigns of the Oldenburg kings are particularly rich and have been much used by Norwegian historians who have time and again spent long periods in the Wendish cities gathering Hansa information. Valuable documents are also housed in the Danske Geheimarchiv, the University of Copenhagen Library, the Swedish Government Archives, the Library of Lund University, and the University Library, the Deichmanske Bibliotek and Rigsarkivet, all in Oslo.

Among published chronicles of value as source material are, for background, the chronicles of Archbishop Adam of Bremen, written in 1064. Then there are those of the Franciscan reader Detmar, who lived around 1400 and covered the period 1101 up to his death; of the Bergenfahrer Secretary from Lübeck, Christian von Gehren, 1425-1486; of the Lübeck citizen Hans Reckermann, written in 1537 and covering his city's history from its earliest days up to the time of its writing; of the Norwegian, Magister Absalon Pedersson Beyer (1567), Om Norgis Rige; (1) and of Magister Evard Evardsen from the following century. The great Norwegian-Danish playwright, Ludwig Holberg, who was originally a Bergen boy, published in 1737 a description of his native city, particularly recounting its Counter.

Among the early Norwegian historians interested in the subject are Keyser, Munch, Sars, Yngvar Nielsen, and Nicolaysen, (see Bibliography). Munch is a gold mine as to early times. His history is most complete and accurate in its account of the Middle Ages.

Among later historians whose works are based largely on original documents and painstaking research are Schreiner, Bruns, Alexander Bugge, Bull, Shetely, Steen, Gjerset, and Bjork (see Bibliography). The last two became Americans. Bugge's Studier over de norske byers selvstyre og handel for hanseaternes tid stands alone as to the light it throws on trade and shipping in the earliest period. The work published

(1) "About the Realm of Norway."



by Bugge and others, Norges historie fremstillet for det norske folk (1), consists of six volumes written by some of Norway's ablest historians and based on latest researches. The late "Syndicus" Friedrich Bruns of Lübeck, for many years the German scholar best acquainted with the early history of Bergen and its Counter, greatly assisted the Norwegians in their search for and use of original documents. His Die Lübecker Bergenfahrer und ihre Chronistik (1900) contains valuable information about Bergen and the Counter, as does also his Norwegen und die deutschen Seestädte bis zum Schlusse des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts. Johann Schreiner of the University of Oslo is today the acknowledged authority on matters concerning Hanseatic-Norwegian trade. His two comprehensive works, Hanseaterne og Norge I det 16 Aarhundre and Hanseaterne og Norges Nedgang (2), are considered books of reference on the subject.

The Bergen Museum through its scholarly director Christian Koren Wiberg, and his assistant Johan Wilhelm Koren Wiberg, made available in fifteen publications much valuable material relating to the Hanseatic activities in Bergen and the Bergens Historiske Forening (Bergen's Historical Society) in its fifty-three published volumes has included much valuable material contributed by scholars on Hanseatic activities in Norway.

(1) "Norway's History Recounted for the People of Norway."

(2) "The Hanseatics and Norway in the Sixteenth Century," and "The Hanseatics and Norway's Decline."

Finally, on the five hundredth anniversary of the peace of Stralsund, in 1870, the Verein für hansische Geschichte was organized for the purpose of publishing material of particular interest pertaining to the history of the Hansa, and classifying the importance and history of its member cities. The society commenced by publishing the Hansische Geschichts-  
blätter, which appeared in forty-three volumes, between 1871 and 1937, and contains articles by scholars and others particularly interested in the subject.

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